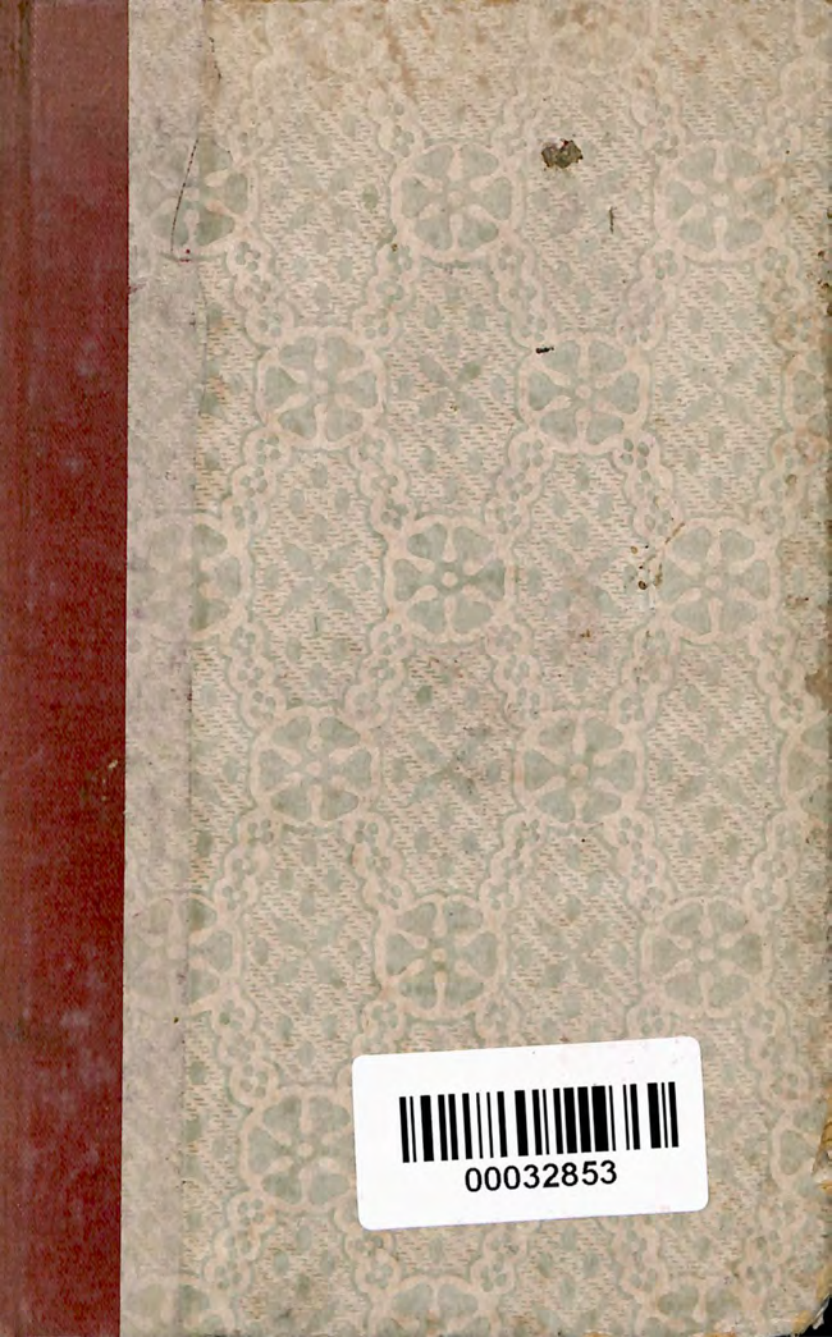
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PURPLE TINTS

OF

PARIS

CHARACTER AND MANNERS IN THE NEW EMPIRE.

By BAYLE ST. JOHN,

AUTHOR OF

"VILLAGE LIFE IN EGYPT;" "TWO YEARS' RESIDENCE IN A LEVANTINE FAMILY," ETC. ETC.

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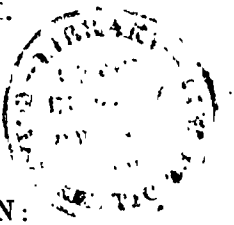
VOL. II.



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CONTENTS OF VOL. II.

CHAPTER I.

Women Educators of Youth—Their Influence on Morality—A Trip to St. Germain—Beautiful Scene—Historical Associations—"Charlie"—Fifine and Chronology—Comparative Length of Life—A Fête-day—Country Amusements—Dancing-places—"Paying the Piper"—Odd Style of Performance—The Police—Degrees of Immorality—Public Balls, by whom frequented—Young Girls—How to make Acquaintance with a Grisette—Simple Tastes—The Old Story—Making Happy the present time—The Fair—Wandering in the Forest—Rose the Prudent—Fifine at fault—A Country Restaurant—Difficulties—Fire-works—Return to Asnières—The Dancing-avenue—How the Grisette was created—She is not Defunct—Mr. Cockney at Meurice's—The Present and the Future . Page 1

CHAPTER II.

The Grisettes not an "Institution"—The Working Girl who has a Friend—Why she takes him—Her Rivals—The Lorettes—Romancers at Bay—The Dame aux Camelias—Immorality of French Literature, past and present—Incidents in Novels—Historical Romances—Alexandre Dumas—Types of Character in Fiction—Their Representatives in the World—The French Face—Influence of Romantic Writing—Lorette and Grisette—Another Adventure of Mr. Cockney—Protection of Life and

Property—Lorettes emigrate—Dangerous Curiosity of Married Women—Advice to Ladies—The Carnival—Agricole makes a Proposal—We agree to go to the Masked Ball—Priests and Soldiers inviolable—The Dames de la Halle—Who and what they are—Victory—The *Catéchisme Poissard*—Reine Leclerc—Carnival of 1853—Preparation for the Ball—Costume of the Ladies—First View of the Theatre—A Pierrette gone astray—A fortunate Bear—Fifine in Society—Effects of Dancing—All the World mad—A good Story with a bad End—Riot and Ribaldry . . . . . Page 20

CHAPTER III.

The Story of Fifine 46

CHAPTER IV.

Feminine Organisation of the French—Ethical Theories—Philosophical Sceptics—Religion and Morals—Feeling of Shame—Rules of Conduct—The Church and the Philosophers—Young Men adrift—Students, how their Morals are influenced—A simple Narrative—Mademoiselle Pauline—Influence of the Boulevard Ladies—A Heart in Danger—A knotty Question for the Law—Pauline at large—A new Friend—A Separation—An Arrangement—Influence of a Breakfast on Misery—Meeting in a Crowd—Marriage in Sight—Pauline and the People—Rise of Aristocracies—Origin of prevalent Ideas about Women—Noble Paternity of Vice—The Porter's Bell—Financiers—A queer Family—Seeing Life—Mothers and Sons—Illegitimate Children—Foundling Hospitals—Trade of Child-Exposers—Influence of Climate on Morality—Beauty of Natural Children—Example of the Old—Inheritance of the Past—M. Croquignole again—Who pays for the Toilettes at Longchamps?—A Plea for Education—Art of Government—Moralising by Force—Danger of Virtue—An over-zealous Bishop 88

CHAPTER V.

General Position of Women—An Odd Anecdote—Esprit de Corps —Virtue—Basis of Religion — A Political Illustration—National Character—Fatalism—Theory of Rehabilitation—Public Opinion with regard to Women — Female Emancipation — Oriental Theories—Liberty and Seclusion—The Married and the Unmarried — Girls, why watched — Artificial Training —The Empress — English and French Systems — Course of Instruction—A Philippic against Crochet-work—Music—German Songs—National Prejudice—Education of Women of the Humbler Classes—The Sisters — Immoral Influence of Catholicism — Convents and Boarding-schools—Prizes in Public— Rewards for Virtue—Champfort—Pension St. Denis . Page 113

CHAPTER VI.

Treatment of Infants — Nurses — A Fortunate Beggar — Cost of Nurses—Their Influence on Character—Governesses—Story of Eugénie and Marie — Going to Mass — An Intrigue in a Church — Aristocracies — English Prudery and French Immorality — Before and After Marriage — Girls of the Poorer Classes—War against Modesty—Literature read by Grisettes— Story of Amélie — Influence of Female Occupations — Dressmakers—The Limits of Knowledge—Indigent Men and Women —Why Women take Lovers—Virtuous Courtesans and French Romancers 130

CHAPTER VII.

Influence of Institutions—Primogeniture and the Position of Women—Allies of Conservatism—Theory of the Married State— Marriage a Convenience—English Sentimentality—Youth in France—The Ideal—Property and Parental Authority—Elopements—A Matrimonial Negociation—Young Ladies not to be

pitied—Object in Life—How Maidens are Persuaded—Effect of Ennui—Preparation for Marriage—The Signing of the Contract—Imitation of the Upper Classes—Expeditious Courtship—Buying a Husband—A Cherry-tree—An avaricious Barber—Saving a Dowry—Making Acquaintance with a Wife—Romance in Marriage—The Family in danger—Odious Theorists—The Bourgeois, how worked upon—Objects of the Democratic Party—Theories of Property—Spoliation—Hostility to Marriage—True Topics of Criticism—Divorce, its effects—Corruption of the Upper and Observation of the Lower Classes

Page 146

CHAPTER VIII.

Marriage Customs — Humorous Persecution — Dinners at the Barrier — Materials — Jokes and Songs — Dancing — An impatient Locksmith—The Socialists—Making Acquaintance with the Bride—Illusions of Youth—A sham-delicate Idea—Two Aristocracies—After the Honeymoon—Beating Wives—Duc de Praslin—Austerity of the old Bourgeoisie—Female Admirers of the Emperor—Joys of Marriage—Antagonists of the Institution — George Sand — Women and Circumstances — Female Education — Madame L—— "Successes" in Society — M. Toussenel—An affectionate Mother—A dutiful Wife—Accepting Presents—Consequence of Immorality—Right and Expediency—A fortunate Rake—Auguste Guyard and Prejudice—M. Leynardier on Family Life—Laws of Property . . 168

CHAPTER IX.

Natural Sentiments—Dutiful Sons—An awkward Maternal Visit — Family Festivities — Presents — Joviality — Sunday Afternoon — Ordinary French Living — Cheapness — French and English Dinners — The Noblesse—Luxury—Glutton's Bazaars — Clothing Marts—Artifices of Tradesmen—The Blouse and the Black Coat—Upper and Lower Classes—Ladies in Fami-

lies—Afternoon Receptions—Rules—Character of the *Fat*—His Conversation—Green Peas—"The Weather and the Crops" Esbrouffe—A Paradox—Scandalous Stories—Imprisonment—A Visit to Mazas—Habeas Corpus—French Homes Page 185

CHAPTER X.

The Bourgeois—His Settling in Life—Paradise of Women—Female Government—Flower Presents—A French Kitchen—The Pot-au-feu—A Receipt—Soupe aux Choux—Kitchen Furniture—Analysis of a Quartier—Clothes'-shops—Tradesmen's Trickery—Fine Names and Semblances—Suspicious Matters—Second-hand Eating-houses—Commissioners of Analysis—Merchants of the Four Seasons—Fried Potatoes—Bad Furniture—Instances—Economy of a French Family—The *Bonne*—Treatment of Servants—Aristocrats and Artistes—Paris Hospitals—Household Work—Washing—Wood and Coal-dealers—Shopping—Mariette and Mr. Yellow—Selling Hair—A Young Heart—Conjugal Fidelity—Dress of the Bourgeois—Theatres—Free Admissions—Theatrical Critics—The Claque—The Queue—Moralising Influence of the Theatre—Stolen Jokes—The Moral Bourgeois—Contrast between his Taste and that of the Working Classes 201

CHAPTER XI.

The French Army—Piou-pious—Military Character of the Population—The discharged Soldier—A Chasseur d'Afrique—Corsican Soldiers—M. Raudôt—Forced Recruitment—Invalid Young Men—Military Height—The Pillar of Order—The National Guard—The Garde Mobile—M. Lamartine—The Affair of June—M. Paul de Molènes—A ferocious Legitimist—How to judge of a Party—The Legitimists—Foreign Troops—The White Terror—1815—Vive le Roi—Massacre at Marseilles—The Mamelukes—Marshal Brune—Protestants at

Nîmes — A French Judge Jeffreys — Religious Persecution — The Authorities—Committee of Massacre—General Ramel—Royalist Ladies—Marshal Ney—1816—Rising at Grenoble—Specimens of Royalist Style—Colonel Vautré—Royal Mercy—Murder and Torture—General Mouton—Sheep's Liver—Burlesque Affair at Orleans—Flaw in the French Character—Chances of a Restoration—The Orleanist Absurdity—Feeling of the Country—Origin of Bonapartism—Napoleonic Myth—Faults of all Parties—A Democratic Emperor . . Page 223

CHAPTER XII.

Love of Freedom—Hasty Politicians—Montesquieu and Virtue—Tory Machiavels—Principle of a Republic—Educating Influence of Monarchies—French Republicans—Waterloo of Liberty—English Opinions—The Socialists—My Credo—A pure Despotism—Philosophy of History—Turning a Handle—Socialist View of Napoleon—The Political Economists—Considérant and Larochejaquelin—Universal Suffrage—Absurdities of Socialism—The Middle Classes—A Ministerial Argument—M. Ledru Rollin—The "Illustrations"—Political Immorality—Mental Reservation and Expediency — The Circulars — Monarchical Manœuvres — Their Punishment — Influence of the Clergy—Evil everywhere in Politics—The Church and the Emperor—A *Mot* of Prince Metternich—Friars—Priests and Women—Abbé Michon—Accusation of Grisettes—A Materialist in the Fields—A strange Atheist—The Clergy and the *Coup d'état* 246

CHAPTER XIII.

The French Ouvriers—Strikes in England and France—The Livret — Conciliation — Power of the Working Classes — Political Opinions—Different Grades of Workmen—Poverty in France—Socialism—Levelling Doctrines—Mr. Dickens—Various Mono-

polies—Influence on Character—Expenditure for Comfort—Dirt—Education of the Ouvriers—Their Manners—Marriages—An ancient Bride—Places of Amusement—Songs—Workmen, how treated by the Government—Dangerous Classes—M. Frégier—The Chiffonniers—Number Seven—A Classical Encounter—Medical Ragman—An Interloper—Miserable Classes—Communism—Theory of the Commonwealth—The Dividers—Taxation—"Utopia" . . . . . Page 265

CHAPTER XIV.

The Material of *Emeutes*—The Artistical Classes—Wide-spread Taste—Number of Artists—Their Opinions—How Reputations are Created—Prudhon—Introduction of Artistic Feeling into France—Its Transmission to the Bourgeoisie—Opinions of Painters—Atelier of M. Jeanron—His Pupils—The Reception-day—Approach of the *Coup d'état*—Atelier of Alexis—Master Jules—Borrowing Money—A Visit to Jules—His Workshop—Inscription on the Walls—M. Credeville—A Loquacious Model—Dunning an Artist—Basil—A Lazy Fellow—Waiting for Inspiration—The Loustic and the Rapin—Practical Jokes—Change in the Manners of Artists—Analogy from Military Life 282

CHAPTER XV.

What I saw of the *Coup d'état* 301

PURPLE TINTS OF PARIS.

CHAPTER I.

Women Educators of Youth—Their Influence on Morality—A Trip to St. Germain—Beautiful Scene—Historical Associations—"Charlie"—Fifine and Chronology—Comparative Length of Life—A Fête-day—Country Amusements—Dancing-places—"Paying the Piper"—Odd Style of Performance—The Police—Degrees of Immorality—Public Balls, by whom frequented—Young Girls—How to make Acquaintance with a Grisette—Simple Tastes—The Old Story—Making Happy the present time—The Fair—Wandering in the Forest—Rose the Prudent—Fifine at fault—A Country Restaurant—Difficulties—Fire-works—Return to Asnières—The Dancing-avenue—How the Grisette was created—She is not Defunct—Mr. Cockney at Meurice's—The Present and the Future.

YOUNG men learn a great deal more from women than from books; a statement not meant just now to be complimentary to the sex. I am out of my customary partial mood. Perhaps I have been recently

jilted, or have been seized with an uncommon admiration of truth. At any rate it is necessary to say, that when the Professor of Moral Philosophy has preached one thing, Laura or Lais often coaxes us into believing another. At the same time it must be confessed—and here my old weakness returns upon me — that if man were left alone upon the earth he would soon degenerate into a brute; as, indeed, he does, when, having forgotten the lessons of his mother, he is cast, by accident or superior force, where tea-kettle never sings, and is compelled to become one of the blind-alleys of the species. People talk of the moralising influence of Solitude. Let us not believe in it. Robinson Crusoe is a myth. How could a man become good where a dog would change into a wolf, without a companion for his heart to cherish or to remember?

French students are, perhaps, more than any other class of young men in the world, influenced by the female society they keep; and the influence, in general, is not for good. It is true that, by associating with the most agreeable section of the humbler classes, they acquire charitable tendencies and democratic sympathies not easily lost; but, on the other hand, they often unconsciously adopt vulgar modes of viewing things, narrow prejudices, and elastic principles. I know that few Frenchmen will admit this. On the

contrary, they affect to pass through the period of their youth—no matter how extensive or varied their experience—without receiving any taint or impression; and great would be their disgust to hear it said that a poor girl, whom they had played with as a toy, could have modified in any way their intellectual development. An idle student met a blooming beauty in the street, wandering along with vague glances. "Where are you going?" cried he. "Nowhere," she replied.—"Then, as we are bound for the same place, why not go together?" They went: so, at least, the story goes. But it is not necessary to prove that on the journey this vagabond young lady must have taught or untaught her extempore companion a great many things on a great many subjects. Without further apology, therefore, I shall continue to relate from my own experience a variety of incidents and scenes of Student Life, thus indirectly showing in what manner the moral theories prevalent in educated French society are acquired, or, at any rate, modified. In the first place, I shall give a narrative of one of my excursions to St. Germain and Asnières, with a party of young students and the companions of their pains and pleasures, performed many years ago.

It was on such occasions that I grew quite familiar with the manners of the country dancing-

places, but after the first *coup d'œil* I confess that I never found much amusement there. We crowded into a cab to the station, and went by rail to Saint Germain. Richmond is beautiful, but it is nothing to that place. The terrace, bordered on one side by forests, descends on the other to a sparkling reach of the Seine, overlooks a fertile expanse of country dotted with hamlets and woods, takes in the whole varied outline of Paris, serrated by steeples and cathedral towers and domes, as well as the vast sweep of hills, where villages and palaces peep at every point between masses of verdure, from Argenteuil all round to Meudon. There is no place which the Parisians admire so much, or with such good reason. On Sunday, especially, train after train flies over the wooded country, up the slope (where atmospheric pressure takes the place of steam), and discharges an almost unceasing torrent of people under the red walls of the palace, where a proscribed Stuart had once leisure to repent the obstinate bigotry that forced him to make way for a Dutch prince adventurer.

The Parisian, however, cares nothing for historical associations. Besides, he has never heard what took place before '89; and if he had, what matters it to him in what room of what big house a discarded king of times gone by spent

some gloomy hours? Our countrymen are not quite so philosophical; and I rarely go to Saint Germain without seeing some relative of my friend Cockney, or some solid North Briton, guide-book in hand, prowling about the gateway, and trying to look sentimental. There are still a few people who feel an interest in that gross family, and now and then we hear in society innocent young maidens warbling wretched ditties, that appeal to sentiments which they would be ashamed to understand. Why will mothers allow marriageable daughters to make that abominable "Charlie" the hero of their imaginations?

"What is that great ——?" [the oath had no meaning in her mouth, and so it is unnecessary to repeat it.] "What is that large Englishman looking up into the air for?" inquired Fifine.

"An English king has apartments there," observed Rose, to whom Guguste had been trying to impart some historical notions. The young man, being in a bookseller's office, thought it necessary to exhibit his learning, and tried to correct her chronology; but was interrupted by Fifine, who cried:—

"It is no matter; I don't care a rush about him. Here is a dealer in *macarons*: the gentlemen must treat us to some."

Agricole looked a little annoyed, because he had

been just telling me that, instead of educating himself, he had been trying to educate Fifine, and had boasted of his success. He admitted, however, that he could not impart to her any proper ideas of chronology, because she could neither believe in the past nor in the future, and could rarely be brought to refer even to the period of her own childhood, much less to the possibility that a time should come when she should cease to be. I believe that to humble, uneducated people, life is much longer than it is to us, who constantly overhaul the years that have gone by, and classify our doings and express them in general formula, and look a-head and analyse life, and reduce it to four or five great events.

I have forgotten to mention that it was fête-day at Saint Germain—to my horror and dismay, for I had been taken away quite unexpectedly. Early in spring the villages in the neighbourhood of Paris by turns begin to celebrate the festivals of their patron saints. In some out-of-the-way places we may still observe the presence of real hearty simplicity on these occasions. Dancing and donkey-races form the amusements. As a rule, however, the fêtes are only means of attracting people to spend money. They take place on Sundays, when all Parisians indulge in a holiday. A fête at a place like Saint Germain is a kind of a fair, with booths

supposed to contain giants, dwarfs, mermaids, crocodiles, albinos, and big serpents—with stalls diffusing an insupportable odour of gingerbread, and exhibiting prodigious assortments of toys — with play-tables, where girls make their sweethearts spend a great deal of money without winning anything—with all manner of whirligigs and weighing-machines—and a band of music and fireworks in the evening. There are also tents for beer and wine-drinkers, and great marquees set up as dancing-places in the evening. Willis's ball is the favourite. People pay a few sous entrance-money, and so much every dance, collected in the middle thereof by a fellow who goes round and generally contrives to interrupt you just as you are saying something soft to your partner; so you have to fumble for sous in your pocket, or stand waiting for change, in danger of having some bouncing grisette launched as from a catapult against you. There never was a more unsentimental invention than this mode of "paying the piper." Another, to which the same reproach does not attach, is nevertheless onerous: you have no sooner got money in your hand than up runs a bouquet-dealer, always inexpressibly ugly, and insists that you shall "flower" Madame, as the phrase is. There is no escaping, especially if your partner half-ironically begs you will not go to the expense.

Meanwhile the figure is finished, and you have to begin the next, after time has been given to cool down. The reflection at once comes that you are playing the fool. There are plenty, however, to keep you in countenance. The principal dancers are students, or shop-boys who imitate their manners. These young gentlemen have set to themselves the following problem for solution:—How is it possible to go through the greatest number of antics without once deviating into grace? Dancing has been transformed into a violent kind of gymnastics, in which genteel young men kick up their legs, wag their heads, distort their bodies, and scatter their arms, elbows, and hands, exactly as if they were puppets hung on wires. Of course every one has his hat on—that is, stuck on the back of the head, to give an additional touch to the idiotic appearance which it is thought humorous to assume. Some girls dance a little more gracefully than this: but these young maidens of whom we read as tripping on the greensward in innocent mirth when the labours of the day are over, in general seem less absurd than their partners, only on account of their costumes. Many emulate ballet-dancers in the audacity of their pirouettes, although the police seem to have definite orders as to the height to which a toe may be raised without offence to official morality. They are there, as everywhere, with their cadaverous

faces and cocked-hats, looking keenly out for "contraventions." No saucy garter can flash on the sight without bringing down the thunders of authority. This is a feature in French character that I have never been able to understand. Our neighbours laugh at us for our respect of the police, and yet submit quietly to have the expansion of their gaiety limited by ordinance. They do not seem in the slightest degree damped by the presence of the officials, and are rarely carried away beyond the bounds prescribed.

No doubt, considering the materials of which these assemblies are in great part composed, the presence of the police prevents many licentious excesses; and it is necessary to notice this fact, because the public balls in the neighbourhood of Paris and within the walls are attended on some evenings of the week, and in some seasons, by thousands and thousands, not only of rakish young men and women of equivocal character, but of servant-maids, tradesmen's wives whose domestic habits have been "disturbed," a great portion of the rank and file of sham-genteel society, by all the students in law and physic, by lawyers' clerks, by shopmen, by respectable bourgeois escaped from their families, by young fashionables, and by an immense number of strangers of high and low degree. This mass of varied composition is not sufficiently reasonable to ensure the

preservation of tolerably decorous conduct; and the presence of one or more alguazils armed with rapiers, and empowered, if necessary, to call in the guard, is found to be essential. At eleven o'clock the dancing ceases, and the crowd disperses.

One of the explanations of the great popularity which these "temples of Terpsichore" enjoy, is the unbounded desire of the French for brilliant society. When they cannot get the reality they take the semblance. A young student once refused an invitation to spend the evening with me on a Thursday, saying, in an important tone of voice, "I always go to the Closerie des Lilacs on that day;" just as one might say, "I go to Madame or Lady So-and-So's soirée."

Partly as the result of their reading and of their experiences at the theatre, partly by a natural aspiration, the young girls of Paris think that to go to a ball is the height of happiness—even to a ball where they are admitted gratis as part of the attraction. But it is nothing unless they have a cavalier "to give them his arm." An experienced man once imparted to me the following instructions: —If you happen to be wandering about, looking into the shop-windows, and see behind a counter a pretty girl, into whose good graces you should like to get, wait till eight or nine o'clock, when she will leave business to go home; salute her, and you will

know at once whether she is virtuous, whether she is already engaged, and whether she is open to an offer. In the last case she will spare a smile or a reserved bow; but often will not consent to be spoken to the next evening. She wants to know whether she is considered worth a little attention and trouble. But life is short, and courtships should not be long. In a few days she will listen to a compliment, and even allow her new acquaintance to conduct her to the corner of her street. At this stage the fortunate youth is pointed out to the other shop-girls as an aspirant; but next Sunday she accepts an invitation to spend the day in the country, running through the fields and the woods, picking flowers, with a prospect of a splendid two-franc dinner. If you are wise you will insist on going to the ball, although the young lady will object because it is improper. I have known many a good sound marriage which has begun in this way; but matters are not always pushed so far as that.

From these hints it will appear that the young Parisian work or shop-girl has very simple tastes—if her notions of morality are not remarkable for rigidity. She delights chiefly in the theatre, in a two-franc dinner at a restaurant, including oysters and wine; and, of course, adores a pretty gown. As I shall have occasion to observe, this curious being, which is totally unknown in England, and which we

may still call a grisette, is a young creature, on the whole very obliging, very ignorant, very "strong-minded," by reflexion from the men she frequents, laughing at the church, and having vague ideas of morality. She abhors those who take life, and despises those who steal; is truthful on great occasions, and speaks evil only of her rivals; rarely shows any sordid feeling, though she naturally accepts presents of dress and an invitation to dinner or breakfast; is very affectionate, even if she has to do with a rascal; and is quite disposed, if deserted by her lover, to leap into the Seine. The number is frightful of young girls who voluntarily die in Paris because, after enjoying a brief period of happy existence, they are unwilling to face again the stern reality—work, without any other object but food—no affections—no hopes. Most, of course, put up with their misfortune, become hard and selfish, and commit sins which in the vengeful silence of their own minds they heap upon the heads of those who left them on that dreary shore.

But this is dismal talk. Look at all those young girls with ruddy lips and rosy cheeks, smiling under adornments, the price of which would scarcely buy slippers for a great lady. They will be happy as long as we make them so. Agricole is talking of what he will do with Fifine a hundred years hence. Life is a laugh to her if he keep his

word, and she promises never to grow old. All the party are not quite so sentimental; but all are giggling, and grinning, and munching fruit and cakes. We have a great deal yet to do; for we are bound for Asnières in the evening: so, after we have all played for *macarons*, listened to the band, stood at the outside of all the booths, visited one which contained a warran lizard raised to the dignity of an alligator, drank several bottles of beer, and swallowed a good deal of dust, we go into the forest, to find an appetite for dinner in its winding paths and shady places.

Numerous persons, for the most part in couples, had preceded us, some racing through the underwood, others walking slowly along and turning down by-ways as we approached, others sitting on the grass with a fanciful lunch spread out before them. Agricole was in immense spirits, which he showed by smoking about fifteen pipes in succession; Fifine ran to and fro collecting flowers, and hiding to be found; Rose carried her plump little form majestically along, listening with rather a critical than a tender air to Guguste, who, in the enthusiasm of the moment, was proposing to build a hut in the forest and share it with her; or, if that was not possible—on account of the guards—to hire a house or a lodging in the town, or to set up a wine-shop there, and take her as a partner for better for worse:

he would give up his situation, put on a blue apron, measure out brandy, and cork bottles. I believe that Mademoiselle Rose made it a rule to listen to every proposition of that kind, however absurd, and to examine it from every point of view before rejection. Indeed, indeed, she was a most prudent young woman!

Fifine suddenly refused to go a step further. She was hungry; and the last time she had been in the forest—four years ago—(Agricole bit his lip—it was before his time)—she had lost her way with her cousin, Madame Pinson, until after dark, and they were obliged to put up with bread and cheese, for everything in the town had been devoured. "You are always wanting to eat," quoth Agricole, rather rudely, imagining in his stupidity that some walk with a rival had been referred to. Fifine's eye was perfectly pellucid and innocent, and her cheek did not change. She understood not the sensitiveness of her master for the time being; and, had his suspicions been well-founded, would have come out with some irresistible argument, to the effect that if men *will* form temporary acquaintance with unfortunate young girls, they must make up their minds never to be certain of their fidelity. I believe Fifine was as faithful as a spaniel, yet she always said that, *for the sake of morality*, a lover ought never to be allowed to relapse into the confident

security of a husband—otherwise men would never marry!

Nothing further passed at that time; but we went back and repaired to a restaurant in the principal street. It soon appeared that Fifine was quite right. We had to wait, standing, for half an hour, until a table was vacated, and had full leisure to become acquainted with the habits of the establishment. The guests were served by women,—great awkward girls, who ran hither and thither, coming in contact round corners, upsetting dishes, breaking plates, shouting that they could not be everywhere at once, and being nowhere when they were wanted. Everybody was hungry on coming in, and had time to get hungry again before anything appeared on the table. Some took the matter good-humouredly, but these admitted they had breakfasted late; others were ferociously sarcastic, and made comparisons between Saint Germain and Paris, which one or two inhabitants of the former place seemed inclined to take as personal insults. We must never say before a Frenchman that his language is weak, that his countrymen are not good riders, that Paris pastry is detestable, that his mistress is unfaithful, or that the place he lives in is dirty. I have known of a duel fought for the purity of Toulon, and there was one talked of for that of Madame Adèle.

At length we dined off bad soup, chops, kidneys,

salad, and cheese, with a fair allowance of wine, and were content to get off at two francs a-piece. The fire-works were beginning when we came out, and children little and great were shouting, "Ah! ah!" in admiration. We proposed taking our coffee and returning to Asnières. As we darted down by the atmospheric, a brilliant burst of rockets lighted up the terrace, and ruddied both the clouds and the rippling surface of the river as it flowed between its wooded banks.

Asnières was not very well attended that night, on account of the superior attractions of Saint Germain. The principal place of resort is a vast garden laid out like a park, with a great coffee-house attached, and a ball-room, consisting of an oblong space shaded by trees with banks on either side. The orchestra takes its place in a huge brightly-lighted alcove at one end; chandeliers are swung at various intervals; and paper lanterns of all colours decorate the trees, and "teach light to counterfeit a gloom" in places where fond couples go flitting along like shadows, under pretence of finding the swing or the weighing-machine.

The dancing is exactly like that I have already described, and indeed, with the exception of individual eccentricities, the same observation applies to the Château des Fleurs, to Mabille, to the Château Rouge, to Valentino, &c. Some slight difference may

be observed at the Prado and the Chaumière, where the regular students congregate and almost exclude other male visitors; for although there is more gesticulation, there is also less vulgarity. The students invent new steps, and teach them to their lively companions; or dress in picturesque styles; or parody the manners of the fashionable world. They have created as it were a particular species of being for their partners—merry, careless, easy in virtue within certain limits, but often generous and disinterested, always kind and obliging to their friends of both sexes.

It is not yet true that the grisette has entirely disappeared. Indeed she could not disappear. She is a necessity of the present French social system; and those who talk of her as gone, mean that she has gone for them, because they have out-grown their follies and have become respectable members of society. However, it is certain that many students have been driven by the ridicule that attaches to vulgar mistresses who cannot spell, who speak bad grammar and have rough hands, not into the society of virtuous women, or women of the world, but into that of the Lorettes, who are really the most corrupted of their old friends, more dashingly dressed, and therefore greedy of money and presents, which were not thought of before, and

altogether a less agreeable and more demoralising society.

By the way, though I have said thus much, let not any of my readers imitate Mr. Cockney's cousin, who once asked at Meurice's hôtel "where he could see a Grisette," and was only saved by his white neckcloth and his spectacles from wicked suppositions. *Grisette* now is almost a term of opprobrium, except at the Opéra Comique; and even there you are told that the thing no longer exists. The authors of the couplets warbled in that hall have long ago removed from the Quartier Latin, and are more familiar with the Rue de Breda. I know not exactly what may now be doing among the students—those times are past for me also—but as long as young men with limited means, and without very rigid notions, are sent without friends or guardians to study in Paris, and as long as there exist young girls living by themselves, working on their own account, with certain ideas of propriety that keep them from mercenary vice, but with cultivated contempt for men of their own class, and a strong relish for the society of well-dressed and agreeable youths, with all the passions and ambitions most fatal to female purity, but with an elegance of taste that keeps them from the hideous sluttishness of many women of corresponding positions in other countries,

and assists in preserving them in default of principle from the grosser forms of vice — so long may we believe, without journeying again into that country, that there still exist lineal descendants of the old grisette, although another name may have been found, that one being polluted.

CHAPTER II.

The Grisettes not an "Institution"—The Working Girl who has a Friend—Why she takes him—Her Rivals—The Lorettes—Romancers at Bay—The Dame aux Camelias—Immorality of French Literature, past and present—Incidents in Novels—Historical Romances—Alexandre Dumas—Types of Character in Fiction—Their Representatives in the World—The French Face—Influence of Romantic Writing—Lorette and Grisette—Another Adventure of Mr. Cockney—Protection of Life and Property—Lorettes emigrate—Dangerous Curiosity of Married Women—Advice to Ladies—The Carnival—Agricole makes a Proposal—We agree to go to the Masked Ball—Priests and Soldiers inviolable—The Dames de la Halle—Who and what they are—Victory—The *Catéchisme Poissard*—Reine Leclerc—Carnival of 1853—Preparation for the Ball—Costume of the Ladies—First View of the Theatre—A Pierrette gone astray—A fortunate Bear—Fifine in Society—Effects of Dancing—All the World mad—A good Story with a bad End—Riot and Ribaldry.

FROM what is said in the previous chapter, the reader will have acquired some idea of what kind of thing a public ball is in and near Paris. I must, however, say a little more about the persons who frequent these places, which are the manifestations of a very curious and, in some respects, very regretable state of society. It is difficult to talk on this

subject without being misunderstood. Many times I have endeavoured in vain, even with the opportunities of self-correction and re-statement which conversation affords, to explain to an English auditor the real relation between the students or young bachelors in general, and the class of work-girls with whom they associate on terms of familiarity. When I think I have clearly expressed the truth, I am often met by the observation, that in the present state of morality the Grisette—let us still use this name—is a useful being; and that it would be well if some such "institution" existed in England. This at once shows me that I have not been sufficiently explicit; for the fact that young men in France almost invariably begin life by having a mistress belonging to a humbler class than theirs, has little to do with temperament on either side, but is almost the necessary consequence of the legal constitution of society. It is the corollary of a code and a system of manners which disregards the affectionate part of our nature altogether. Perhaps, when I come to describe the impediments that are placed in the way of marriage, and the heartless system according to which that arrangement takes place, I may be able to make all this clear.

I am in danger also of leaving another erroneous impression, from my unwillingness to enter into certain details. Mademoiselle Fifine, to whom

allusion has so often been made, is not a character of every-day occurrence, though by no means a solitary exception. She represents "the working-girl who has a friend." In Paris there is a vast class of young persons who, being deserted by their parents sometimes, but oftener led by love of independence, live alone or in couples, and support themselves by a variety of trades, as washerwomen, sempstresses, milliners, glove and bottine sewers, or by labouring in factories and other places where cheap and delicate hands are required. Very often they succeed in earning just sufficient to exist on, but, like all of us, they require more than this. Ambition and love of pleasure, too, seem to be innate in their race. It would be impossible to reduce the reasons and the ways by which they are led astray to a few general heads. Besides, we all know the appetites and the passions that are the causes of wrong doing. The French work-girl is rarely satisfied with the company of men of her own station, who take the liberty of being as immoral as their superiors, and who, besides, grudge the taxes levied on matrimony in the shape of fees. She is almost always open to the advances of a student, an artist, or even a well-dressed shopman, who, careless of appearances, will go with her to the theatre, and give her his arm in the country-walks she so much delights in. Thus accompanied, too, she ventures

fearlessly into the brilliant balls, which present to her the most fascinating aspect of society she can ever become acquainted with.

If these balls were frequented only by such as she, there would not be much harm done, once the lawfulness of her condition admitted. But now it is necessary to mention that the chief ornaments, if not the most numerous attendants of Mabille, the Château des Fleurs, the Château Rouge, even of the Chaumière and the Prado, are what are called by the new name of Lorettes, who occupy in French civilisation the position of the Hetairæ of ancient Greece and the Dancing-Girls of the East. No one can deny that these women have certain fascinating qualities, that their society is in some respects engaging, or that they have few, if any, representatives in our country. An enormous amount of trash—at once pernicious and repulsive—has, however, been written about them of late. Romancers, essayists, and dramatists, finding the public a little weary of virtuous grisettes, and even of amiable adulteresses, have endeavoured to attain originality by investing the Lorette with poetical attributes, and have succeeded in interesting large bodies of readers, and long successions of audiences. The *Dame aux Camelias*, the very name of which cannot be commented, is the best illustration I can adduce. Its object, and that of fifty other similar works, is what is called the

"rehabilitation;" that is, the glorification of the courtezan. From the time of Manon Lescaut downwards, there has always been in French literature a tendency of this kind; but the discovery has only recently been made, that the use of a fine name can convert a dangerous into a highly moral task.

However, at the risk of diverging a little from my theme, I must say that a good deal of exaggeration has been indulged in by those who speak of the immorality of contemporary literature in France. Of course it is in general anything but edifying; but there is a disposition to represent it as having gradually become worse and worse. I am inclined to think that those who take this view are slyly attacking democratic principles; and, indeed, the corruption of French literature is never left out in an enumeration of the frightful results of freedom. The truth is, however, that nothing has been published and applauded within this century half so bad as the abominations of Voltaire, Laclos, and Crébillon. Even Molière, the great Moral Comedian of the Great Century, treats "what men call gallantry" with a dangerous and aristocratic levity, never surpassed in the farces of the Palais Royal. The worst books of the present day pay "the homage of vice to virtue," and pretend to aim at moral objects. A husband, influenced by sympathy for some criminal amour of his wife, blowing his brains out, or leaping

down a precipice, to be out of the way, is more offensive than dangerous; and I doubt whether any one was ever corrupted by reading the companion description to this, namely, that of a woman discreetly disappearing to make way for a rival, or heroically sharing the affections of her lord with some sentimental stranger. These odd situations are rather suggestive of an unsettled theory of morality in their inventors than likely to stimulate imitation; whereas the immediate effect of nearly all the light literature patronised by the old régime was to make husbands ridiculous, and consequently prepare their wives for seduction.

Still it must be confessed, that the popular writing of the present day in France tends strongly to produce an unwholesome state of mind, and spread false ideas. The great majority of the French, who know anything at all, men and women, get their ideas of morality, philosophy, and politics, as well as of geography and history, from novels. Historical romances are the reading of grocers and porters. "I don't care," say they, "about all that sentimental rubbish of George Sand, Lamartine, and such-like; I prefer Alexandre Dumas, who instructs whilst he amuses." There is scarcely one error in this writer's works which has not become an article of faith amongst certain classes. What dependence may be placed on him as a depictor of foreign parts the

reader can judge from the fact, that he takes two Platonic lovers to coo in a cottage and garden situated somewhere opposite Messrs. Chapman and Hall's, in Piccadilly! All his geography is pretty much of this calibre; and it is scarcely necessary to say, that the Englishmen who acquire their ideas of history from Sir Walter Scott are quite as well off as the Frenchmen who study the doings of princes and great men in the Herculean romances of this accomplished writer.

Perhaps in no country does literature exert an effect so immediate on the externals of society, and so faint on the habits of the mind, as in France. I have often met people—to take an exaggerated instance—who were the evident apes of some character in a favourite romance. There are four or five types commonly found in the popular fictions, and it is easy to recognise their imitators in the world. A mysterious novel is rarely without a youth of feminine aspect, yet gigantic strength—with muscles of steel and a skin of satin, as they express it; and accordingly we often meet a puny being, whom a breath would blow away, boasting of his "nervous strength," and who is throwing himself into a consumption in endeavouring, by gymnastic exercises, to increase his supposed power. Another hack character is a man of tremendously energetic countenance, and no one can have failed to have noticed certain hard-featured

men who go about in society trying to assume an expression of terrible resolve. In general, however, the French face produces an impression of irresolution and weakness. Even the beard and moustache cannot hide its want of firmness; and the most ferocious-looking, when shaven, appear mere ordinary citizens, quite meek-looking, or at any rate wanting in solidity and strength. Keenness is often manifested; but there is rarely any of that massiveness which is our distinctive mark.

It is unnecessary to enumerate the other fictitious personages which exert an influence on the imitative youths of France. The fact that this influence really exists to the comic extent I have pointed out, will prepare the reader for the statement that the forms, at any rate, of immorality, in this present age as of yore, are determined in a great measure by literature. When the Grisette was popular, no young man would consent to be without his Mimi or his Rigolette; and now that the Lorette has come into favour, there is an increasing demand for that sort of thing, of all qualities and prices. On this rock the work-girls split; and this is the cause why they are less pure, if I may be allowed to use that word, than of yore. A real Lorette is a gulf that swallows up fortunes. The students, therefore, have, in many cases, tried to train their humble companions, whom they loved of yore, with their red hands, rosy faces,

plain caps, and simple gowns, to imitate the Aspasias of the Rue de Breda. They begin to think it vulgar to listen to vows of constancy uttered in bad French, and to receive *billets-doux* which only love can decipher. Genteel immorality has become the fashion. This is the reason why, to a certain extent, the Grisette, under her simple aspect, has disappeared. All free girls are forced to try and emulate the fine lady, under pain, if they do not succeed, of losing their admirers. It is not difficult to persuade them to this; for one of the essential qualities of the Lorette—the *c—— comme il faut*—is to be dazzlingly, voluptuously, miraculously dressed; and many poor things fancy they are quite naughty enough to be amiable, if they can only emulate the toilettes that have driven nearly all nominally modest women from Longchamps.

The Lorettes derive their name from living in considerable numbers in the neighbourhood of the church of Notre Dame de Lorette, which they frequent, and which is appropriately meretricious in ornament. Most of them are known, like the caged beauties, to the police, and inscribed on their Register; but they live in lodgings, with furniture of their own, and are often mistaken by foreigners, especially our sentimental countrymen, for fashionable ladies. Cockney once being at a public ball, happened to drop his diamond ring, which a Lorette

picked up and restored. This act of impulsive honesty touched him. He fell in love with her, and remained her devoted servant for some time, supplying her with money; which she spent, when she could get out, with young Frenchmen, who joined her in laughing at the fool whose generosity furnished them with means of amusement.

It is peculiarly characteristic of Englishmen to suppose that rigid honesty in money matters is a warrant for the existence of all the other virtues. It is not very uncommon for them to be so struck by some act of probity in a girl, who may be unchaste, ungrateful, foolish, and malicious, as to marry her in a moment of enthusiasm. This shows a very low state of mental and moral development, and explains why foreigners imagine us to be sordid Mammon-worshippers. The influence of the same aberration may be traced in all our legislation: we used to hang a person for stealing five shillings, as for murder; and we now discuss whether a five or a ten-pound franchise will secure the purest representation. There never was a more degrading theory than that government was instituted for "the protection of life and property," except that according to which a man's wisdom and virtue is measured by the amount of his having: so that he who has so much

can exercise a certain right; and he who has so much more, another right; and so on.

However, these ideas are now only entertained from habit and tradition, and we shall soon get rid of them. Such men as our friend Cockney, indeed, will become enlightened at last. I have left him in the clutches of a rampant Lorette. He was called away on business suddenly, but made her promise to follow him. Shortly afterwards he sent her a good sum of money, which she spent in jollification, and then wrote for more, giving some hypocritical reason why she did not come. He sent her another supply — also wasted. A third time he was generous. Cockney is really a fine fellow, and believes in the virtue of those who do not pick his pocket; but at length he began to suspect the real case, which was this, — that Brunette might be trifled with in Paris, where she could have other society when she pleased, but that it would require much finer offers than he made to lure her into barbarous foreign regions. Some Lorettes, when Paris has become an unwholesome residence for them, go to Russia as governesses and ladies'-maids, and improve the morals of that delightful country. Most of them are cold, heartless creatures, capable of a good action now and then, and not inclined to steal; but they bring up in their costly apartments greyhounds, monkeys, and par-

rots, and send their children to the Foundling Hospital.

It has often been remarked, that when some celebrated Lorette announces the sale of her furniture — an event that may signify either a rise or fall in position — a great number of women of the world always hasten to "view the premises," under pretence of a desire to purchase, but really in order to penetrate once, at least, into what their imaginations have represented to them as something mysterious, marvellous, and dangerous. To a large class of French married women the routine of ordinary life, the round of daily duties unsanctified by affection, and scarcely inspired by duty, becomes early distasteful; and the very fact that men who can mix in the most amiable and brilliant circles, and who have beautiful wives of their own, often seek the society of the Phrynes of the Quartier Breda, suggests the opinion — not unfounded — that these beings have some secret power of fascination irrespective of personal charms. Ladies would give the world to possess it. This accounts for the curiosity which all women who dare to speak the truth express to know the details of lorette life. Some, more venturesome than others, though rather virtuous than the contrary, allowing themselves only one lover at a time, have sought for interviews with the most famous of their

rivals, imagining that they could learn the art of seduction from them as from professors. Vain hope! They will always be defeated if they fight with borrowed weapons. But in every country, if women would devote a little more of their time to developing their companionable qualities, and, forgetting those which they have been forced to acquire in order to lure us, foolish youths, into matrimony, — if they would read more and play less, speak better, sing no German or Italian, leave anti-macassars to manufacturers, who can make them as well and cheaper; and if they must work, occupy themselves in household duties, — if they would do all this, in as far as it suited their husbands' tastes, they would not need to enter into vain competition with Lorettes or Opera-dancers. However, after all, the men are, perhaps, as much to blame as they.

I do not propose to give any account of the details of lorette life, but mention these women simply as the rivals and the models of the young work-girls who associate with students and artists, and who form the common visitors of most of the public dancing-places. This mixture is the worst feature of the irregular existence led by young men, who, partly from thoughtlessness, partly from a growing distaste for simple pleasures, partly in obedience to fashion, corrupt their partners in order to

make them amusing, and have rendered it extremely difficult, in some cases, to distinguish between them and the professional votaries of vice.

There are some seasons of the year when every one who has young blood in his or her veins seems to be seized with a rabid desire of enjoyment. The Carnival is one of these. Although of late years it has greatly fallen off, chiefly in consequence of the interference of the police, it never comes round without inspiring an immense proportion of the population of Paris with a desire to make fools of themselves. Even those who have previously resolved to spend their time in sobriety rarely resist the influence of the season. Agricole came one day last year to me with a serious proposal that I should join him, Alexis, Fifine, Augustine, and some other wags, male and female, most of whom had formerly belonged to our club, in a promenade down the Boulevards in a gilded chariot; and was induced to desist only when I represented to him that at present such exhibitions were used merely as modes of advertising great clothing-marts. However, I agreed to join the same jovial set in a visit to the masked ball at the Opera, which I had never thought of seeing when I should have been more disposed to enjoy it. The Empire had been proclaimed the previous year; and terrible warnings and threats were in circulation against whomsoever should venture any political

allusion, in word or deed, or should make fun of priests or soldiers, the two great pillars of the present régime. All civil functionaries were abandoned to merciless ridicule — for it is the object of Napoleon III. to simplify as much as possible what may be called the moral machinery of government, to make fear and humility the fulcrum of his internal policy, and to get rid as much as possible of that complex thing called public opinion, which is created, guided, and formed by the press, the magistracy, and political assemblies; which criticises, applauds, and stigmatises; strews the Boulevards with flowers, and directs alike the poignard of the fanatical Republican and of the hired Royalist assassin.

At the Carnival of 1851 a good deal of excitement was created by the appearance of a body of women, afterwards known to have been hired for the purpose, dressed in the costume of the Dames de la Halle of times gone by. They came tumultuously in, and began shouting *"Vive l'Empereur!"* but were soon obliged to desist, because a universal murmur warned the police that a counter-demonstration was imminent. So they were privately warned to retire. By the way, some impression was once produced on the public mind by a florid account of the brilliant reception given to his Imperial Majesty by the ladies of the Halle. It becomes interesting, therefore, to inquire who these ladies are;

not with any idea of diminishing the value of their warm adhesion to the new order of things — my democratic feelings would prevent this — but that the exact truth may be known by those who have not travelled. Illustrations of manners that bear upon the great political events of the day are always pleasing. The expression, "*Dames de la Halle,*" is a modern euphemism for "*Poissardes,*" or Fish-fags. They were not so called because they all sold fish, for they dealt likewise in fruit, vegetables, and flowers; but the name is a generic one, applied to all those brazen-throated dames who vomit slang at their customers one day, and shout at the heels of Success another.

> "Whom Heaven
> Is pleased to style Victorious — there, to such
> Applause runs madding, like the drunken priests
> In Bacchus' sacrifices, without reason
> Voicing the Leader-on a demi-god."

These said *Poissardes,* under the name of *Dames de la Halle,* had formerly the privilege of complimenting in person the king, the queen, the members of the royal family, and the chief nobility, upon public occasions — of course, for the sake of a present. The custom ceased at the Revolution. They endeavoured to revive it under the Great Napoleon, and went to greet him on his return from some campaign. But he did not like the smell of fish, and received them so roughly, that they did not try again

until after Waterloo. Then eight or a dozen shabby old women, half tipsy, tried to get an audience of Louis XVIII.; but they were only admitted to see his valet-de-chambre, who thanked them, in the king's name, from a distance. Their delight may be imagined, therefore, when the trumpet of popular applause was again put into their hands. I am disposed to think highly of Louis Napoleon's wisdom in entrusting, during the silence of the press, the task of vociferating his praises to these foul-mouthed but enthusiastic viragos. They, at least, are hearty whilst they are at it, being accustomed to disperse their affection in quarters where no mincing accents and tender words are fashionable. Their reputation for potent language is, indeed, so great, that there exists a kind of manual of blackguardism, entitled "*Le Çatéchisme Poissard,*" or the art of abuse. Its influence has been considerable in forming the taste of the country, and very few women of the lower orders have not dipped into it. I may add, that a fishwoman, named Reine Leclerc, has just been condemned to one year's imprisonment, five hundred francs fine, and costs, for circulating anti-imperial news; so that if enthusiasm is rewarded, disaffection is not optional.

The Carnival of 1853 was a miserable affair indeed, which it grieved me not to see; for it suggested that, however the French might endeavour to

conceal the fact, they feel they have less reason to be glad than of yore. In the streets there were few costumes—scarcely any, as I have said, but such as were sent about on horseback, or in chariots, to advertise the "*Prophète,*" or other houses of that kind, where ready-made articles of dress are sold. The balls, nevertheless, were tolerably well filled. Dancing and debauchery are irresistible. Besides, it is only at this season that jollity is allowed to be kept up until morning. At every other time all places of public amusement, except theatres, are closed precisely at eleven, just when the witching hour is approaching at which Englishmen usually begin to unbend.

The custom is to hire a domino or other costume at shops opened for the purpose. Here a gentleman's ticket may be obtained for six francs and a-half, and a lady's ticket for nothing. At the doors the price is ten francs. Comparatively few men wear masks and dresses at present; and the majority thus being in black coats, there is no danger, as of yore, that a bag of flour will be thrown over the *pekin,* or civilian. The only penalty which non-disguise entails is an immense number of extracts from the "*Catéchisme Poissard,*" which one is bound to bear with good humour. We arrived in excellent order about twelve o'clock, having taken care to indulge, according to immemorial custom, in

a bowl of hot, spiced wine, after supper,— a meal, by the way, never taken on any other occasion in France.

Fifine was charming as a flower-girl, and looked indeed so pretty, that we all regretted the necessity of a mask. As for Rose, she had chosen a costume usually selected by slight elegant figures, and reminded me irresistibly of a Chinese Mandarin. Guguste, whose attentions had at length been crowned with success, and who has now serious thoughts of matrimony, was at first angry,—swore that all the men would run at her and kick her, mistaking her for a balloon; said some other absurd things, nearly made her cry, and at last declared that he was quite proud of her. Augustine, who has pretensions to be an elegant lady, had chosen a white domino, and seems to have entertained vague hopes of captivating a prince,—for which she was probably punished by Jules, who had a mania for pinching: at any rate, we heard a mouse-like squeak as we went down-stairs. I may as well mention that she disappeared in the course of the evening, returned home at a late hour, and was laid up for a week by a fever, proceeding, it was suspected, from Tom Pouce's "real Guiana cane." Similar episodes, however, were always occurring, and nobody cared anything about them.

It is almost superfluous to describe the brilliant

scene that presented itself as, after much shoving and laughing, we emerged from the right-hand staircase and stood a moment—ere we were carried forward into the turbulent crowd—looking down that vast hall. It was filled from end to end—pit, stage, orchestra, as every one, I suppose, knows from experience or hearsay, being changed into what appeared to merit the name of a dancing-plain. A frenzied polka was in course of execution; and the performers, nearly all decked out in the most brilliant colours, were bobbing up and down, whirling, sliding, and tottering in a thousand little spots, which they cleared as they went amidst the prodigious mass of spectators. A continued roar of laughter and insane speech rose on every side. A firmament of lights glared overhead. The boxes were full of people, some whispering to one another, some shouting to friends below, some hanging over in wonder and amazement. A young girl dressed as a Pierrette, who seemed to have lost her companion, was crushed up against me. I thought she would be stifled; but she rose on tiptoe, quite careless of a danger that usually appals her sex, and cried, or rather screamed, "*Mon Dieu, que c'est beau!*"—"Oh, heavens, how beautiful!" Beautiful, indeed, as the hall of Eblis! What do you do there with your sweet voice and your enthusiasm? I held her in my arms for about a minute as we

were pushed on through the crowd, when she was taken from me by a huge fellow dressed as a bear—perhaps her companion with whom she had come,—perhaps not,—who knows? She dropped willingly into his paws, and was soon whirling round with him; and I often met her afterwards looking up at his hideous jaws, and evidently quite proud of his attentions. He may have promised her a breakfast; in which case I hope you came with him, little Pierrette, or are very used to that sort of thing, otherwise it will go hard with you, and you will *not* relate with glee, as no doubt you have planned to do, all your adventures to wondering cousins and comrades.

Fifine, who had tormented Agricole to take her, plays the prude sometimes; at least, with misplaced modesty, she would not allow strange men to touch her waist, and quoted her habitual phrases: "*Jeu de main—jeu de vilain;*" and "Look as much as you please, but touch not." Agricole put her under my charge while he danced with Rose, and solemnly warned me not to lose sight of her; "for," said he, "though I trust her as far as woman can be trusted, I will not take the responsibility of exposing her to all the influences of this place. Like the rest, she will get intoxicated, mad, before one hour is over. Depend upon it there are fifty women here, who have come allured by the certainty of remaining unknown,

and who promise themselves only a little innocent recreation, and who to-morrow —— But let us not moralise: look after *her*, that is all."

The disagreeable part of the business nowadays is, that though the women are sure of impunity—unless some impudent fellow, transgressing all the laws of the place, should remove their mask by fraud, in which case his ears and cheeks are not safe—men are, of course, recognised by their acquaintances, and are obliged to trust to their discretion. I saw at the Opera, and have seen at other places, men whom the world could scarcely conceive as present at such scenes, not merely spectators, but joining in all the mad enjoyment of the occasion,—laughing, talking worse than nonsense, flirting, and even dancing—or, rather, gesticulating—like madmen and fools, as they all were for the moment; for there is indeed something intensely exciting, something that cannot be explained or described, some magnetic influence that pervades the frame on such occasions, changes one's character, alters one's motives, and makes one act up exactly to the spirit of the place. A Bishop could scarcely remain there an hour without dancing the *cancan*. You must not be surprised, therefore, if I was instigated by Fifine to join in a monstrous quadrille organised in every part of the huge hall. How I acquitted myself I don't know; but Agricole, to whom I had in good faith

declared that I would not for the world join in such absurdities, professed himself delighted with my rapid demoralisation, and took care to dance with Fifine all the rest of the evening himself.

An incident occurred a year or two ago at one of these balls that might have furnished matter for a farce, except for the catastrophe. A married man announced to his wife that he was suddenly called away into the country—an old worn-out trick,—and went to "the ball" with some friend, probably a lady. The wife immediately suspecting what was planning, said nothing; bade him, indeed, an affectionate farewell; and as soon as his back was turned hastened to a dealer in costumes, hired a rose-coloured domino, and at a due hour went to the Opera. After some wandering about, and a few flirtations, the disguised lady came upon her husband, who was very warm in his attentions to a companion. However, he does not appear to have been overmuch fascinated; for, seeing an elegant domino following him, with the vanity of his sex he imagined he had made a conquest entirely by his personal attractions, contrived to lose his partner, and eagerly offered his arm to his wife. Possibly she had not accustomed him to the gentle key in which she now spoke. At any rate he did not recognise her, and the courtship went so far that he offered, and she accepted, an invitation to an early breakfast at the Café Foy. No sooner had

they reached the little salon than, with many blandishments, he begged her to unmask; which she imprudently did, before he had touched the elegant meal laid out. Instead of laughing, as in a play, and pretending that he had known her all the while, which certainly she deserved for her ingenuity and her cleverness, the disappointed brute began instantly to abuse her; upon which she reproached him with his extravagance in taking her to so expensive a place, under the supposition that she was "no better than she should be,"—he who used to grumble at giving her a two-franc dinner on Sundays! The dispute lasted half an hour, after which the unreconciled couple ate the breakfast "that it might not be wasted," and went sulkily home, she with bitter hatred that her joyous freak had ended in so humiliating a manner, and he vowing in his own mind never to forgive her because she had spoiled his pleasure. Animal! He was surprised afterwards when his wife perceived that Monsieur ——, the grocer, had amiable qualities!

Of course we all stopped until six o'clock in the morning, in order to see the *Galop Infernal*, which usually winds up these uproarious proceedings; but it appears that several accidents had recently happened, and so, just as the last quadrille finished and the mad torrent of masks began to rush round the vast hall, the police interfered and put an end to the

fun, by reminding all whom it might concern that there was a Power in the land which could control the movements both of caperer and conspirator. There was an attempt at disapprobation, and I think an arrest was made. But every one was weary; and, indeed, the infernal gallop had been danced by anticipation several times in the course of the evening. The whole crowd made, accordingly, for the doors, and gradually succeeded in getting out into the chill morning air. Cabs were plying on the Boulevards, but the drivers raised their whips in vain. Most of the girls, still half-intoxicated by excitement, determined to walk home in their dresses, which had been pretty the night before, but were now strangely rumpled. Some danced along the pavement; others, in vain, tried to appear elastic. At that hour the Lorettes had vanished, and all those jaded little creatures were grisettes, some of whom had come with a lover, others in search of one, others merely in hopes of amusement. I overheard several talking of the sad necessity of going to work again that very day. Fifine remembered the time when she made a shirt after returning from the ball, and congratulated herself that she was now absolved from that duty "by her dear Agricole," as she said, in an expansive manner not usual with her. She had long been delicate, and coughed dreadfully as we returned home, refusing obstinately to ride. The time was

evidently past when she could indulge in such dissipation with impunity; but the person who should have told her so would have been very ill received.

After all, one quits these places—except in the very thoughtlessness of youth—with anything but satisfied feelings. They must exert a demoralising effect upon any one who has still a remnant of purity to lose—at least, when they are made an habitual resort. The Opera ball itself is an expensive place, and is not visited by more than some thirty thousand people in the season; but at the same time, all over Paris, there are open masked balls of every degree of respectability, and as they are always crowded, it is fair to infer that the majority of young people not kept within their families by authority, and a great many people no longer young, indulge in this kind of dissipation at least once a-year. On the occasion I have described I noticed, of course, no political allusions; but as the night advanced, in the hall, in the staircases, in the boxes, and the galleries, there was an outpouring of indecency and ribaldry such as I had never heard before. The *foyer* was a little more select; but even there it was possible to understand the license of the Saturnalia. What was my surprise, accordingly, when, not long afterwards, at a party, a lady whispered to me, "The flower-girl with whom you danced at the Bal de l'Opéra had a white and blue rosette upon her cap!"

CHAPTER III.

THE STORY OF FIFINE.

I HAVE already hinted at the circumstances under which Agricole first met Fifine. Their story was very simple—some will say vulgar, or worse. It began long before the young student had escaped from that happy state of mind—that time when the bright and joyous colours of the future are stolen to deck the present—that arcade of flowers and sunlight, through which we all pass on our way from boyhood to manhood. This I am sure of, from certain particulars that have come to my knowledge. Yet, at first sight, Agricole's conduct, stated without commentary, would suggest that he was neither ignorant nor innocent. He knew something from reading, a good deal from hearsay—little from experience; and was more pure in act than in intention. He had heard that, as a matter of course, a student must have a mistress, just as he must have pipes and books, and deliberately set about discovering one. He had no romantic ideas, at least he thought

so; and beforehand dwelt on all the incidents of his amour—the beginning, the middle, and the end; looked forward, especially, to the means of escape from the trammels he was desirous of entering into; dropped a few tears by anticipation; felt a little villanous; and consoled himself by making a proper provision for the deserted one—who was to be all constancy and devotion, of course—and whom it would be very difficult to prevent leaping into the Seine, or dying by a pan of charcoal. This catastrophe averted, she was to pine away, nevertheless, and die young, to satisfy that ferocious sentiment of jealousy which would stifle the object of first love, even after it has been cast away, rather than that any one else should enjoy it.

These preliminaries settled, with a certain amount of deliberation, Agricole, as I have said, looked abroad for an eligible person answering exactly to his idea, and was a little surprised that she did not present herself at once. His friends recommended him to Mademoiselle Célestine, whose heart was unoccupied at that precise moment; but she was too fond of bonbons, laughed and talked too loudly, and committed too many offences against grammar. Mélanie, Delphine, Rose, Augustine, were all too vulgar, too material, too covetous, too noisy, too greedy, and too light in behaviour. "Why, my friend," said to him a more experienced man, when

he heard of these rejections, "you are not seeking to amuse yourself, but are looking for the woman that is to decide on your destiny. Take care: this is dangerous work. A student must choose a mistress that he knows to be unfit for a permanent companion, or he never gets rid of her."

Agricole thought this advice impertinent, and went on seeking and indulging in little episodes by the way. For a whole week Mélanie thought she had succeeded in "fixing him," as these poor girls express it, and boasted that she was to go to Saint Germain with him on the first fine Sunday; but the fine Sunday came, and Agricole shut himself up in his room, after having told his porter that he was at home to no one, especially not to a young lady with poppy-flowers in her bonnet, who might call.

One day the *femme de ménage*, or charwoman, who did Agricole's rooms in consequence of some disagreement with the portress—probably based on vile pecuniary considerations — said, with a very wicked smile, that a young girl had come to live on the same floor, indeed in the very next apartment. The student, who was trying to read the Code Napoleon, rather impatiently observed that he did not care. "What I mean," said the old woman primly, "is, that she is a *lingère;* and if you are polite to her, she may sew your buttons on for a trifle, and mend your shirts, which want it."

Her remarks roused no curiosity; and it was at least three weeks before Agricole saw his new neighbour. Perhaps because she had been recommended to him, he did not at first like her appearance at all. She had a low forehead; eyes, with outer corners slightly elevated, and always sparkling merrily, even satirically; a pretty little nose; but a large mouth, which would have been ugly except for the splendid rows of teeth it contained; teeth, that seemed constantly ready to bite anything that came in their way—apples or hearts. Her cheeks were fresh and healthy; and there was something oddly engaging in her manner. She had a great talent for mimicry. Half her talk was pantomimic representation. By this means she saved a great deal of time; and whilst Agricole was leaving his key in the lodge, and giving deliberate instructions in case any one called, Fifine—for this was she—would relate, for example, that she had met So-and-So's husband, imitate his gait, his way of wearing his hair, his tone, with indescribable rapidity, and be half up-stairs before Agricole had had time to finish laughing.

These little scenes, however, happened only at wide intervals, when she was in a high state of good humour; for, although she had been known to the portress for years, she only associated with her just enough to be on good terms. She was such a gay, lively, little thing, that Agricole could not help

feeling a good deal of curiosity about her, and asking some particulars of her history; but at the same she was so opposed to all his theoretical notions of beauty and grace, that the idea of courting her never entered into his head. To tell the truth, at that time she spoke French infamously, had a strange set of slang phrases, and indulged in some startling witticisms,—for she was very witty without knowing it. This was the reason that few people knew she had such a quality; for half the success of a Wit depends on his hearers being in wait for good things, which otherwise dart out of sight before understood,—like a quail rising at the feet of a slow marksman.

The *femme de ménage*, who seemed to think it almost improper for a young man and young woman, living so near, to keep on such distant terms, several times returned to the charge with jokes and insinuations; but being always repelled, at length went about declaring that Agricole was a great villain to have led astray that charming, chirping, little creature. I sometimes think that Fifine could have had none of the external qualities that are admitted to be irresistible with men; for no woman ever condescended to be jealous of her. All her neighbours, young, old, ugly, pretty, married or unmarried, united in making a pet of her. Nobody did anything well but Fifine. She was the supreme judge in the quarter of the fit of a gown, the shape of a

bonnet, the words of a love-letter, the sauce of a ragoût, and the certain something which, added to or taken from a man's nose, makes him handsome or otherwise. Even afterwards, when she had given occasion for scandal, no one threw stones in her direction; mothers smiled benevolently at her as she passed; and she received three offers of marriage when she was known to be the mistress of Agricole. Housewifery must be an uncommon thing in France to fetch a price like that.

I have promised to relate how all this came to pass, and have claimed the privilege of doing so without being more severe than poor Fifine's neighbours. The girl was marvellously discreet with all but Agricole; and perhaps even he never knew the whole of what she had undergone. She had lived, according to her expression, "*as a bachelor,*" ever since the age of seventeen; and ever since that of nine or ten had been almost entirely abandoned by her friends. Her mother had died when she was very young; and there was something singularly pathetic in the way in which she would point to an empty chair by the fire-side, and wonder what changes might have taken place in her fortunes if the *bonne femme* had lived to occupy it. Not that she ever admitted distinctly that, in her view, the state in which she was living was at all morally wrong—only unadvisable on worldly grounds. To

have reproached herself would have been to complain of Agricole, and neither her prudence nor her love counselled this. However, it *would* have been pleasant to go before the good old lady and say, "This is my husband," just because the word is in common use, nothing more: though, after all, "there would be nothing extraordinary in her being married; many worse people were; and she thinks ——" but she goes no farther, suppressing all notice of the huge amount of comforts she feels capable of procuring to a man "who should really belong to her." Agricole sits moodily at the corner of the fire, puffing smoke through his moustaches. I catch one eager inquiring glance which she casts at him; and although she would laugh at you if you were to talk plainly of the efficacy of a few words spoken before the *maire*, she is peevish for a minute or so afterwards, says she does not like smoke, throws open the window though it is a bitter frosty night, and scolds the strangers who spit on the floor.

All this, however, is anticipation, and would be unpardonable if my readers did not already know precisely what took place. Their curiosity must be directed to learn the means and the justification. Fifine was brought up as an apprentice; never received assistance or advice from her father, who lived far away in the country; and found herself, as I have said, at the age of seventeen, entirely dependent

on her own exertions for subsistence. She could scarcely either read or write; knew nothing but a few maudlin songs, which her companion work-girls had taught her; had learned to despise the clergy and religion, which she identified with its professors; believed that happiness was Youth, and nothing more; thought it odd that people should live to be old and miserable; and, above all, held it as the central article of her creed that men were cold, selfish beings, who would accept all a woman's sacrifices, but make none in return. At the same time, strangely enough, she allowed it to be perceived that, without these barbarous men, the world would seem to her a very dismal sort of thing. She rather respected our hard-heartedness, perhaps not being able to understand it. The Beard Wearer was the monstrous idol that scared whilst it fascinated her. If she had not held very rigid notions of the dignity of women, she might have submitted to be beaten; but "the man who beats a woman is a coward," and a blow would have shattered at the same time her esteem and her affection.

Strange things come to pass sometimes. Agricole, rather alarmed by the charwoman's hints, and not all desiring any particular intimacy with his saucy little neighbour, often unpolitely passed her on the stairs, with a nod instead of a bow. On the other hand, it seems quite ascertained that she looked

upon him as an ugly, awkward, country lout; and the portress once amused me by relating how Fifine used to mock her neighbour, and make him ridiculous in the eyes of all the other lodgers. She even drew a caricature of him, said to be an exact resemblance; but as it was with her finger on a mirror dimmed by her breath, there are no means of ascertaining this fact. All we can be certain of is, that for three months Agricole ceased to be looked upon with much respect in the quarter, because Fifine set the current of public opinion against him; and all the women agreed that he was sinister-looking, ill-mannered, slovenly, and poor. The young damsel was not very scrupulous in her hostility, and even went so far as to ascertain from his laundress the number of shirts he possessed: "Four and a half," said she, with great contempt; for her press was full of linen, and she had been brought up to consider it as the first necessary of life.

Her contempt, however, was not malicious; for one day that Agricole, suddenly finding himself in a buttonless state just as he was going to a ball, applied to her for assistance, she not only gave it, but took occasion to examine his cupboard, and lecture him on its condition. She proved to demonstration that in a month or so he would be obliged to go out with his coat buttoned up to his chin, and nothing between his cravat and his beard. At first

he was inclined to be offended — for he had no money to spend just then in shirts; but when she proposed to introduce him to her employer, and "be security for him," — this was said with a quiet, conscious air, as if she had a banker's reputation — he could not refuse, and so their courtship began by his being placed under obligations to her—a plain reversal of the laws of nature.

I have said their courtship, but should have said their familiarity; for this *liaison* was no sudden affair—no spark accidentally dropping into a pan of gunpowder. Its progress was slow—so slow that nobody knew how it went on; some believed it was all over before it had begun, and some were not quite sure for years that more than the prelude of the ballad had been played. Fifine's chief quality was discretion. She always kept her own counsel, which is the first part of wisdom. However, with friends, neither she nor Agricole objected to talking over the early hours of their acquaintance, and the poor thing took especial delight in insisting on the profound impression of ugliness which her lover had at first produced.

Agricole was rather delicate in health at that time, and often required nursing. The portress, indeed, one day informed Fifine that he was lying ill in bed — a piece of information that drew forth the remark that many a handsomer fellow than he was

in a worse case. "Your heart is very hard," quoth the portress, trying to look very humane; which she really was, though Nature had given her a face like a man. "What is he to me?" cried Fifine. "These young fellows spend all their strength in wickedness, and then fancy that women were made to be their nurses. I sha'n't go and see him. I hate sick people. I hate sickness. No one is ill but from his own fault. He eats too much, he drinks too much, he sits up too late, and I am sure that he is a horrible rake."

Fifine was a curious girl. She had faith in no divinity but Health. I never heard any one talk so much about the necessity of avoiding disease. It seemed as if she believed in the sacredness of the human body. According to her, the only damnable, unpardonable sin, was dirt. She was not very coquettish, though neat in her outward appearance; but I have her own authority for a variety of facts that prove that she venerated her neat little person to an amusing extent. Perhaps this excessive attention to cleanliness is incompatible with a corrupt mind. Ablutions have not been made a religious duty without an object. At any rate, Fifine carried aversion to Disease—*her* Satan—to so great an extent, that for several days she could not be persuaded to see Agricole, though she sent him in broth, and a variety of articles of dress not quite adapted for

male wearing. He must have cut a ludicrous figure sitting up in a camisole fringed with lace, holding his basin of bouillon in one hand, a spoon in the other, and trying to understand why his good little neighbour objected to come in.

At length she *did* come in, under pretence of seeing the invalid in a great new night-cap which she had bought for him, and the point of which reached up almost to the ceiling. He was preparing to thank her, with tears in his eyes — for this persevering series of small attentions had made some impression on him—when, rather to his discomfiture, she gave utterance to a merry peal of laughter, and, fetching a mirror, stood at a respectful distance, turning it a little up and a little down, a little to the right and a little to the left, in order that he might catch a view of his comical head-dress. He tried to persuade her to come nearer, but she feared vengeance for her cruelty and held aloof, which was the best thing she could do.

After this she visited him as often as her occupation would allow until he was nearly well, when he was again abandoned to the care of the portress. In the last interview, however, Agricole obtained a promise that one Sunday, as soon as the doctor gave him permission to go out, "she should take him into the country." Such was the form of the agreement. The prospect of this party of pleasure seems to have

rapidly set Agricole on his legs, and in due time he announced that the complete restoration of his health required nothing more nor less than a trip to Enghien. Fifine, who seems to have been peculiarly cautious, insisted that a friend should accompany them, under pretence that her companion might be taken ill; but she pointed out, as a consolation for this disappointment, that Agricole was to have "the right to claim her arm."

As I am not writing a romance I must here skip over a few months, which were always briefly alluded to, as if things too sacred to mention had then happened. The privilege of ubiquity is not allowed to the narrator of this episode of unambitious life, which, I am afraid, is hardly worth telling after all. People do not care nowadays for stories, true or not, that have no "purpose" in them, and indeed require facts and adventures to be pre-arranged and forced into a certain order to illustrate some questionable moral. I am sorry for this, because, if ever I am persuaded again to write a romance, it shall contain only incidents that have really occurred, or might have occurred, to the real people I shall choose as "heroes;" and if I am told that nothing is to be learned from what I say it will be no fault of mine, and I may answer that neither does Nature teach anything—provided always there be no failure in the application of my rules. Every day there are Truths

perishing around us, and no Artist is there to paint them.

All I could ever learn of the mysterious months that followed the visit to Enghien was, that Agricole began his attack upon poor Fifine's heart by being horribly jealous of her, by refusing to open his door when she knocked, and even by passing her on the stairs without speaking. The charwoman spread vile reports that he had ruined and deserted her. Many people know the sins of their neighbours before they have been committed. At length Fifine determined to have what she called "an explanation." The rough treatment she was subjected to was an imputation on her character. Let her be told of what she was accused, and then—the porter had already received notice that her lodging would be vacant next quarter-day—why, then, she would disappear, and accept the offer of marriage which M. Bouvier, the widower, whom she hated, had so often made her. I have reason for believing that this said M. Bouvier—at least as a marrying man—was a mere myth. "Do you think," said Fifine, "if I had received an offer from any honest person, after I had ceased to be a foolish girl, I should have refused? No one would. We are all too glad to be settled in life for that."

How Fifine managed to bring her eloquence to bear upon Agricole, who shunned her most obsti-

nately, I do not exactly know. He used to say, jocularly alluding to this circumstance, that it was she who courted him, not he her—a remark that caused some tears to start; it was, therefore, probably true to a certain extent. However this may be, Fifine, instead of bringing about a rupture, began soon to be "talked of" in the neighbourhood—not as having taken a criminal, but an imprudent step. "For these students—they cannot be depended upon. After wearing out her youth, he would plant her there; and then, what would become of her?"

It is difficult to tell a story of this kind in the proper spirit, without that ferocious tendency to judge harshly, which is the favourite sin of virtuous people, and yet without that hypocritical benevolence, often assumed as a cloak to immorality, according to which it would seem, that if they that are sinless may punish the frail woman, they that are sinful may forgive and patronise her. Of course Fifine was wrong to yield, and I shall endeavour to show how far; but I cannot consent to abandon her and her sisters who are in the same position, whatever language they may speak or spell badly, to the unmitigated contempt and condemnation of the world. To speak the truth, Fifine obtained and deserved esteem and affection from many of her friends.

I have already said how strangely her education

had been neglected. She could read and write sufficient for her purposes when Agricole first knew her, and afterwards made rapid progress; but her mind was absolutely destitute of any acquired knowledge, save what might be contained in a few old songs which she had bought from time to time and sewn together into a queer-looking volume. Agricole kept it as a curiosity. The songs it contained were rather maudlin in tone, but pure. The favourite was "*Jenny l'Ouvrière,*" I think. It describes the virtuous grisette with some pathos. No other book that I could ever learn had been opened by this uncultivated girl. Her early companions and teachers had impressed her, it would seem, with a fanatical abhorrence of the clergy, whom she always accused of corrupting half the young girls of the country. Two or three little incidents of her personal experience had confirmed her in this view. Yet she was not without religious sentiments. When the great festivals of the year came round she invariably went to mass, and on the rare occasions when she could be brought to speak on this subject confessed, with some emotion, that "she thought it did her good." At other times, when out in the fields wandering in search of wild flowers on Sunday, the church bells seemed to affect her disagreeably, and I have seen her clench her little fist and shake it in the direction of the importunate sounds.

"Ask her why she did that?" said I to Agricole.

She was angry at having been noticed, and admitted, only after some teazing, that the bells reminded her of a time—a long while ago—it seemed as if in another life—when "she was not as she was then."

"Pshaw!" said Agricole, biting his lip; for every allusion of that kind seemed to him a reproach.

A prude person running over this narrative has remarked that I am wrong to admit having been on terms of familiarity with this young girl, when she was living in direct defiance of the laws of society. But at that time I regarded her simply as Agricole's wife, and although their union had not been sanctioned by man nor blessed by the Church, yet in every other respect her conduct was so irreproachable, and she was so clearly the victim of circumstances, that I could not find it in my heart to be severe. That she was guilty of a certain amount of moral wrong I judge, not so much from her actions—because all actions take their qualities from opinions, and that only in a human sense is reprehensible which we know to be so—but from the transitory fits of repentance that from time to time disturbed her, and prevented her life from being as happy as it might have been.

Except on these rare occasions she seemed to

consider herself as occupying, relatively at least, a very respectable and praiseworthy position; for, instead of comparing it with the few examples of pure wedded life which she could meet with in her world, she pointed, with rather malicious satisfaction, —on one hand, to the instances of conjugal infidelity that she knew of; on the other, to the degrading existence of the Lorette, and the Grisette that aspired to imitate that fantastic being. She was not only faithful to Agricole—this might have been prudence —but she suffered with him; and there were traditions in that household of entire weeks spent without money — of the journeys of shawls and sheets to the *Mont de Piété*—and even of whole days, during which the unfortunate couple had sat hand in hand without breaking a crust of bread. This misery was caused by Agricole's imprudence, not hers; yet she bore the chief brunt of it, and bravely faced, not only creditors and landlords, but the gloom and ill-temper of her Master; for in this light she looked upon him. A thousand familiar details here suggest themselves; but this must necessarily be an imperfect sketch. I give it as an example, divested of the common objectionable circumstances, of the way in which young men in Paris often spend a great part of their lives, and of the dangers to which the daughters of the working classes are exposed.

I must relate one or two more characteristic details of this union, in order that it may be made clear how such matters are managed in France. A good while after the memorable visit to Enghien—after Agricole had bored a hole through the partition wall that separated him from Fifine's chamber, and transmitted by that means various invitations to take tea with him, which were at first refused, and then accepted once for all—after M. Bouvier had been definitively driven to despair—after the portress had looked wise and compassionate—the young couple began to feel uncomfortable in their unrecognised position. Madame Pinson, therefore, received a formal invitation to spend the evening at Fifine's own room, and was treated to a fabulous amount of hot wine. The object was, that she should go about and relate exactly what she saw: but she related a great deal more; and in a certain circle Fifine was now generally known as Agricole's *ménagère*. It was long, however, before he came to spend all his time with her. She prudently determined not to give up work, and allowed her "friend" to come in the daytime only on condition that she should not be interrupted in her shirt-making, and that he should superintend the potatoes that were baking in the little oven of her *poële*. Customers who dropped in to give orders thought it queer to see a smart fellow with a potent moustache hanging about in this way;

but, of course, at once understood the relation of the two. An old gentleman, who had come on behalf of his wife, presumed on the circumstance to send Fifine an invitation to accompany him to the theatre, which caused a frightful scene of jealousy. Agricole obdurately went out, under pretence of visiting an uncle who had arrived in Paris; and Fifine, who followed him unperceived, saw him take up a post at the corner of the street, and keep watch, wrapped in his cloak like an Italian bravo. She slipped into the *fruitière's* shop, and allowed him to cool his heels for an hour; after which she invested a sou in an apple to throw at him, and always relates, with delight, how foolishly glad he looked when his hat was knocked off.

The reader knows already that Agricole came up to Paris with but small means, and that, if Fifine had not worked, they would at once have fallen into misery. As it was, his acquaintance with her was for a long time on economy. He gave up dining in a restaurant, and learned to live on ragoûts and salads, which the "neat-handed" Fifine dressed between two stitches; but, somehow or other, he got into the habit of studying even less than ever, and thought he could not improve his mind better than by reading novels out whilst Fifine worked—it was practice in elocution. At first, when he respected her less than afterwards, and thought himself merely

engaged in an ordinary episode of student life, he chose rather highly-seasoned pictures of Paris manners. She did not express herself shocked, because she imagined that what *he* read must be good for her to hear; but she yawned, and several times went to sleep. His vanity was piqued; and he reproached her. What would he have? She knew more of what was going on than the man who had written that book. Love was very good to act, but it was nonsense to read about it. In three minutes she would teach him more than he could learn from fifty volumes.

There was no resisting this. Agricole threw away the stupid novel, and a little while afterwards asked Fifine what she would like to be taught. "To read and write well, and to keep accounts!" "Why? Did she want to get away from him, and learn to gain her living?" "No; but——" Here she burst out crying. He pressed her to speak the truth, and she did tell a part, which was this: she was tired of working with her fingers from morning until night to earn a mere nothing; and besides, was it proper for a young man of his station to consort with a sempstress? Agricole thought she was becoming idle and ambitious, and shook his head sadly. The real truth was, though Fifine dared not say so then, that she was yearning for an imitation, at least, of married life; and wished to devote all her energies to taking

care of a house and husbanding his money. So far, and no farther, was she ambitious. It was some time before her desires were realised; for Agricole, though rapturously fond of her in her presence, had not yet got rid of his idea that he was engaged in a mere passing amour; and thought it would not be honourable to persuade or allow Fifine to throw up her old occupation, when, perhaps, in six months, it would be necessary to abandon her. On the contrary, he took every opportunity to talk solemnly of the inestimable value of the habit of work; "as if," said Fifine, scornfully, relating these matters to me, "he ever leaves me a moment of idleness or rest now:" whereupon she enumerated everything she had to do in the day,—to fetch bread and milk in the morning—to order in charcoal—to go marketing with a huge basket—to cook three meals—to keep the furniture shining—to make and mend all sorts of things, and every now and then, when Agricole's caprice prompted, to deck herself out as a lady—to rise up in all the scrupulous cleanliness she thought indispensable to authorise her to take his arm, from the midst of kitchen utensils, half-finished gowns, socks in the process of darning, and go out to the Luxembourg, to a *café chantant*, to a theatre, or to the country. Agricole had a passion for rushing out beyond the barriers just on the very days when everybody else stopped at home. He would allow

the summer to pass with but few excursions; and when the leaves had fallen, and frosty winds blew—actually even upon a week-day—he would suddenly insist that, leaving all the household in disorder, they should set forth on foot, and wander away some ten miles, all along the borders of the Marne, with their last five-franc piece in their pocket, to be spent at Chatillon in a good dinner, not leaving enough to pay for an omnibus back.

When Agricole went to Poitiers, of course he swore to Fifine that he would never forget the sufferings which she had already begun to undergo in his company. "Ah!" whispered the poor girl, "if that accident had not happened, I should have been sure you would come back to me." He assured her—and very sincerely, more sincerely than she liked—that he thought all was for the best. When he was better off, why, perhaps——. They both laughed whilst relating this separation, but afterwards Fifine looked very sad. As far as I could learn, she had undergone terrible privations when she was left alone. Her health had been impaired, and her dislike to her *état* gradually increased. Secretly, no doubt, she thought—and in this she was quite reasonable—that a young man like Agricole had no right to enjoy her society in that lazy manner. Herein she differed from her compeers, the true grisettes, who are perfectly content to preserve their

industrious habits, and to bestow themselves on the first handsome scapegrace who will give them a little amusement in their leisure hours. Fifine was too serious-minded and thoughtful to be long content to remain in this equivocal position; and, during the existence of our Club, at length gave a proof of her resolute character. Without saying a word to Agricole, she closed up her accounts with all customers, realised the enormous sum of fifty francs, and stated calmly that she could not "wait on a man" and be an *ouvrière* at the same time. As she dressed out in a most bewitching style to make this announcement, Agricole never thought of uttering any objection—wondered, indeed, that he had not before perceived how comfortable they might live together "without doing anything"—formed projects, however, of enormous legal studies, with Fifine by his side—and invited all his friends to a house-warming.

He soon found, however, that to keep up an establishment on his own principles would ruin him in a week or so; and that, even when he gave the management of the money entirely over to Fifine, misery soon began to come to them. As I have said, they suffered dreadfully—lived on potatoes and water for weeks. Agricole at length obtained some employment that occupied him a few hours in the evening, and brought a little money. "For more than a year, however," he declared to me, "I had

the charmingest mistress in Paris, and we both existed on eight hundred francs."

The most curious part of all this is, that, by degrees, M. and Madame Passager—who removed to a neighbourhood where the nature of their relations was not known—formed a very agreeable circle of acquaintances, partly amongst the humble bourgeois, partly amongst professional men. I was taken by them to very pleasant houses, where I heard poor Fifine revelling in conversation with staid matrons, boasting of her household triumphs, sometimes tripping in her French, or introducing an odd proverb that made her hearers stare, but behaving, on the whole, with so much propriety, that I was not surprised at her being a favourite. The only trace that I could discover of her real condition was, that she never lost any opportunity of expressing charitable sentiments for unhappy or even misconducted women. The ordinary severity of society—touching her so nearly—roused her into indignant eloquence; and she used to maintain, what was probably almost correct, that all women, with some monstrous exceptions, aspired only to lead a decent married life: but that they were deceived, led astray, corrupted, and ruined, by these horrid, detestable, heartless, and demoniacal creatures, *les hommes!* M. N—— whispered to me, after hearing her speak in a peculiarly emphatic manner, "She is

not married, I swear; but so long as my wife suspects nothing, what matters it? I wish half the virtuous ladies I know were as good company for my daughters."

I must not, however, linger too long on the minor incidents of this narrative.

There was one proud day in Fifine's life. An important-looking letter arrived from an *avoué* living in the Rue Saint Honoré, requesting her to call upon him on business. She was quite bewildered, but dressed out in her best and went with Agricole, who remained without, smoking his cigar, on the pavement, and wishing he had gone in; for who knows whether the letter was not a snare? In about half-an-hour Fifine came running out breathless to him, and announced, in a solemn tone of voice, that she was an heiress! He thought she was mad, but soon learned the facts, which were these: her mother had been possessed of some property, which her father, living in a remote province, had until that time made use of. Now, however, her brother and sister, having come of age, had caused an estimate to be made, and had discovered that the two children were each entitled to a "*bien*," or piece of property, which would produce the enormous sum of five hundred francs, or twenty pounds sterling per annum. The object of the *avoué*—an *elderly*, quiet gentleman, as she took care to observe—was

to request her to sign a power of attorney, without which the proper steps could not be taken. "And what have you done?" inquired Agricole, who began to feel a little annoyed that Fifine would no longer be absolutely dependent upon him. "I have refused to sign anything," said Fifine, "because I don't understand business. I must write to ——, and ask for explanations."

That was not the proud day I have mentioned. It came many months subsequently, when, after an interminable correspondence, Fifine understood that her brother and sister were pressing their father, whom she never remembered to have seen, very hard, and that, if he were compelled to give up the property, he would be obliged to take to work again in his old age. "He has never done anything for me that I can remember," said she; "but he is my father. Let him keep the money as long as he lives. I will trust to you, Agricole." Accordingly, she went down to her native place, and announced her intentions, and persuaded her brother and sister to agree with her. Many apocryphal accounts are in circulation, I am sure, concerning that wondrous journey. Fifine, who thought it necessary, perhaps, to enhance her own importance, is supposed to have been received with enthusiasm, treated as a great lady from Paris, and pestered with offers of marriage. An authentic proposal, from the director of a gas

company, is on record. Nobody seems to have inquired or cared how a young woman, "living as a bachelor" in Paris, could have got on so long without assistance. Provincials have vague ideas in that respect. I mistake: her father *did* say to her, with a cunning look, "Of course you have *an acquaintance*. Tell us what he is like—tall, short, black, or brown?" Other people pestered her sometimes with questions; but she affected great demureness, and stated that she occupied the distinguished position of *femme de chambre* (confidential) in a Russian nobleman's family. She was rather proud of this flight of imagination.

In due time she returned to Agricole. It was after this incident that he, endeavouring to follow out his preconceived plan, tried to break with her. He had already abandoned her once before, driven by misery, when he went back to Poitiers. This time he seriously thought that it would be better for her, as for him, that they should separate; and turning the matter calmly over in his mind, and comparing his case with that of many of his friends, it seemed to him that the moment had arrived at which the inevitable catastrophe might be brought about without much suffering on either side. He was so accustomed to Fifine's society, that he could not realise the discomfort of being deprived of her. For several months, too, without having suffered

again the extreme of poverty, they had been very hard-pushed for the means of existence. There had been ill-temper on both sides, some bickering, a few reproaches, one scene of bitter recrimination. Fifine had casually remarked that she was "not of a temper to break her heart for any man," which assurance made Agricole breathe more freely; for his great fear was, that, after the approved fashion of novels and plays, the cast-off girl would commit some desperate action as soon as she felt solitude close in around her, as soon as she had no one to scold, no one to serve, no one to suffer for and with. He began to believe in the elasticity of the female character, and the versatility of the female heart; and, for the first time, tried to persuade himself of the truth of what in base moments he had said to his friends as an excuse for what he meditated, namely, that there was a cloud over the girl's early history. What if there were? What right had he, in addition to all the other joys he had found in that unlawful union, to suppose that absolute purity had fallen into his arms? Then he would lean his face upon his hands, and think, and picture the past, and smile, and laugh, and have faith; and when Fifine came in, flushed and sparkling with health, from some marketing expedition, quite unconscious that her destiny had formed the subject of his thoughts, he would take her in his arms, in a

paroxysm of extempore affection, and leave her to marvel what might be the reason of what had become so rare of late.

At length her instinct told her of what was passing in his mind. This was some time after the breaking up of the Club sans Gêne, when Agricole began to repent of having, to a great extent, abandoned the independent life of a student to live as a sort of sham married man. A month or two had passed in jollity and junketing, in laughter and all manner of fondness. Then came a re-action — a period of gloom, in which the weak-willed student looked upon himself almost as a dupe. This was an unhappy season for Fifine. She never complained, or sought an explanation; but redoubled her attention to Agricole's comforts, whilst diminishing her manifestations of love. She often alluded generally to her precarious position—said, with a forced laugh, that she knew it must come to an end—that Agricole's parents might wish him to marry—that, of course, he would do so—that, in that case, she would not be embarrassed—she would never trust man more—she would return to work: it is true she had forgotten her own trade, and did not like it, but it was easy to learn another—her present mode of life was anything but an idle one—at any rate, no one should accuse her of imploring the assistance of one who abandoned her. These painful remarks were

sometimes made in the presence of Agricole, who pretended not to notice their bearing, and went on, it appears, planning his liberation, though without any positive idea of carrying it out within a definite period.

A scheme of this kind is rarely formed without leading to an explosion. Its presence in a household of that kind, however pent in, must bring gloom and restraint along with it. Even a stranger could notice that two sets of thought were at work—that both were wretchedly meditating on the destiny of their lives.

One day, at length, the unhappy couple had a great quarrel about some mere trifle. The matter took its importance from their excitable and irritable state of mind. I met Fifine in the street next morning. She tried to look impudent, and to say, in an off-hand manner, "It is all over: I am free." I knew what had been talked of, and was rather surprised to see her take matters so easily. Indeed, my first feeling was anger. She chatted a few moments about indifferent matters, and then asked me to go and see Agricole, "whom she knew to be very ill." Afterwards becoming more and more serious, and with trouble suppressing a good cry — a weakness that would have made her ashamed for ever — she told me that they had fallen out desperately, and that, in a moment of

passion, he had told her that he wished to marry "some respectable woman," and that his father had written to him, proposing the hand of a lady *comme il faut*. He also said some kind things to Fifine, had proposed to settle an annuity on her, and, indeed, had revealed all the matter of his thoughts for many months past. Grief and fear soon cured her of her own passion, and she listened calmly to what he had to say. But, with consummate prudence—having called upon the *Bon Dieu* now that she was cast away from shore, and felt herself drifting out alone into the sea of life — she determined not to implore for mercy. According to her philosophy, men never relent towards a woman on her knees, but, on the contrary, despise her. Abruptly, then, to his amazement, she told him, with some contempt, that she, too, had made up her mind to a separation, and absolutely drove him, with a storm of reproaches, from the house. "He has written to me," she said, "begging permission to ask my pardon, and explain himself; but (here she began once more to play a part, though yet uncertain whether events would not compel her to abide by it) I don't want to see him. The most painful part is past; at any rate, no one shall see me suffer for the future. If I were to meet him, I might after all fall on my knees, and ask him to return to me for a little while longer. I may die

soon, and then he would be free in an honourable manner. But it is best as it is."

I pitied her exceedingly, and went to Agricole's room. He was in bed with his coat on, smoking a pipe, and tried to receive me cheerfully. "Of course you know the news," said he. "Fifine has broken with me." He seemed not sorry to throw the fault upon her. I scarcely knew what to say, and was not quite sure whether I ought to work for a reconciliation or not. The world would certainly have cried—even the most humane part of it—that things could not have come to pass in a better manner. Here was a couple, who had lived unlawfully together for a long time, separated by accident, as they must have separated sooner or later. Neither party talked of despair or suicide. There was, of course, a little grief, a little pain to soothe. People who have lived together, united by the bonds only of affection, and despite public opinion, cannot separate without some pangs. Both parties, however, seemed to be reasonable. Their conduct was quite creditable, especially Agricole's. Poor young man! he had the best intentions. He had offered to assist his discarded mistress as long as he lived; although, to be sure, he had no particular resources just at that moment. On the other hand, Fifine evinced great good sense, even coldness; which is, fortunately, a characteristic of that kind of girl. She

had no intention of creating a scandal, and really deserved to be rewarded. Besides, she had spent some years with a young man much superior to herself in family and position. This would be something to remember. She was still quite good enough to become the wife of a respectable workman, "who would take her as a widow." She had made stories for her after-years, that was all. Half a century hence she might be singing with sly looks and merry voice, "*Combien je regrette mon bras dodu,*" &c.; and if, as stanza succeeded stanza, memories of these young times did come over her, Agricole would then, in the silence of her passions, appear as a noble-minded young man, who had led her astray, it is true, but who had repaired his fault as far as his position would allow him by living with her in a decent way, by indulging her in some happy moments, and by caring for her afterwards, when, in accordance with the usages of society, he found it necessary to become respectable, and take an officially recognised partner. Besides, whispers some M. Croquignole, it is not absolutely necessary that the two should never see one another again. When each is settled in life, the acquaintance may be renewed, and all these foolish tears smiled away.

I was not quite satisfied that, in the present case, any of these remarks were applicable, and so resolved to plead neither one cause nor the other. It was

evident that Agricole was very miserable. He was pale and dirty. Everything was in disorder. There were four five-franc pieces on the table. He had wished to leave two with Fifine, but she had refused. Nothing could be more deplorable than the state of the room. It had scarcely been visited for six months above once a-week; for it was merely intended to keep up appearances in case any country cousin came to Paris. Agricole had long ago lived elsewhere. He laid particular stress on his lonely condition, with reference to its influence on his comforts; and tried to excite my sympathy by detailing the impossibility he should be under of ever looking decent again, of ever getting his things in order, or of finding any decent food. There never was a widower half so forlorn as a married bachelor thrust back suddenly into pure bachelorship. I laughed at all these complaints, which I knew to be a sort of shame-faced way of expressing how miserable he really was, and did not reply to the question, "What does she say of me?" At length, seeing that I obstinately remained silent, he exclaimed, fiercely, "I can't spend my life in this state: it is of no use arguing with me: I must settle; I want to be surrounded by a family of children, in fact —— but I shall never find any woman like Fifine."

He talked wildly for some time, and rather sank

in my estimation than otherwise. What restored him to my good graces was the admission that he had *stolen* a small packet of things, which I need not enumerate: one of them, however, was the "tail of hair," as he called it, which Fifine had lost on the occasion when she was very near being united to him by a tie that would have been indissoluble. He took them out from under his pillow, and fell to crying as he counted them over. All this is very incomprehensible, no doubt, to those who do not know the deeper mysteries of the affections, and how the soul may bound back irresistibly towards an object which had seemed to become indifferent. I cannot philosophise on this point, but must confess that my eyes tingled to see this poor fellow struggling between two impulses of equal strength; and that I more than once felt inclined to assist the promptings of habit or love, and beg him to go to Fifine.

The poor girl herself had at once set about fitting herself to her new position. She got employment the next day at a glove-sewer's, and had fair prospects of earning fifteen sous by almost as many hours' work. Somehow or other, she said, her eyes were not so sharp as formerly; of course not—she must have spent half the night, perhaps all, in crying. This, however, I could not bring her to acknowledge. Madame Pinson, who had rallied round her in her disaster, having been frowned away formerly by

Agricole, protested she was the greatest fool in the universe. Why should she fret about an ungrateful wretch, and why exhaust her health in such miserable work? An "eligible party" might be found. I was sorry to see poor Fifine already in a struggle with bad advisers. She paid no attention, however, to her insidious cousin, and went on asking me news of "the friend." She had just convinced herself that he was actuated by the very best intentions—remembered that he had often warned her that this must come to pass—withdrew her accusation of treachery. "And yet," said she, "is it not very hard that, without being charged with any fault,—when I have done my duty to the utmost, cared for him when he was sick, and fasted with him when he was poor?—Yes, it *is* very hard to be thrown away like an old rag. I know I am not a virtuous girl, but, if Agricole marries, his wife will make him—*so*." I could not help laughing at her droll gesture, which reminded me of a song in "As you Like it." She laughed herself, and explained that "the friend" was not so easy to manage as I supposed; that he had his whims, and his fancies, and his oddities, and that, in her opinion, no married woman ever did so much for her husband as she had done, and had meant to do, for "the ungrateful one," as she now and then called him. That was not the time to dispute with her whether or not it was absolutely necessary for hus-

band and wife to be indifferent one to the other. I suggested that she ought to answer Agricole's letters. "Perhaps so," she said; but would he not now notice her bad spelling, which he had never done before? She did not wish to leave a mean impression on his memory.

Matters went on this way for several days. Agricole remained in his room without ever stirring out, without undressing or washing—almost without food. I told him one evening that this was exaggeration, and that it would be better to return and live in his old way until he felt strength of mind to separate in a proper manner. He did not answer, but asked if I would take him to the theatre. I assisted him to dress, for he was very weak. He walked downstairs, supporting himself on a cane. When we got into the dark street he took my arm, and pressed it rather convulsively as he said, "Don't look at my face. This is all very foolish, but I am not going to the theatre; I am going to see Fifine."

I knew it long before, when I saw him so eager to go out. We went slowly, for the open air made him dizzy and weak. He made me cross the street when we came near the house, and showed me that Fifine's window could be descried from a place he well knew, where he used to stop as he returned home late at night, and see that she was waiting up for

him. The shadow of a head bent, as if in the attitude of sewing, could be seen on the curtain.

"I sha'n't allow this," said Agricole, resuming the tone of a master. However, he could scarce muster courage to ascend, and begged me to speak to the porter for him as we passed. When we got up-stairs we found the door of the little apartment not locked, and went in softly. "Go first," whispered Agricole, pushing me as I hesitated in the diminutive ante-chamber. I looked in, and saw that the poor girl had fallen asleep over a glove; exhausted, no doubt, by long watching. Her chin was knocking against her breast as she poised herself, with a remnant of consciousness, on her chair. Agricole, somehow or other, got upon his knees by her side. I think he dragged himself across the room in that position, and began kissing her hand. She got it loose, and pushed away his head, burying her white fingers in his great locks of hair. Suddenly her eyes opened, and never did I see a brighter glance of delight, or hear a more joyous cry. They never noticed my presence, and so I went softly away. Nor did I see them for many days afterwards; for their reconciliation lasted an immense time. They sent for me to tea one evening, and appeared quite as happy as ever they had been;—Agricole more so, indeed, for he had got rid of some of the qualms

which he had felt about the impropriety of his position. As for Fifine, she talked, and laughed, and sang louder than usual; but, every time I saw her after that, there was an uneasiness in her manner that made me uneasy. At one time, even, I thought she was unforgiving, and nourished some thoughts of revenge; but there was so much kindness and devotion in her tone when she spoke to Agricole, that this idea soon vanished.

From that time forward it appears there was not a shadow to trouble the serenity of their union, until, at last, Fifine became very ill. She fancied at once that she had "a ball of water on her chest." The truth is, she was attacked by a kind of consumption. I was away from the country part of the time. Besides, Agricole and she had gone to a great distance off to live; and for I believe a year I only saw them occasionally, once or twice. When we went to the ball at the Opera, the disease had already made some progress; but Fifine never looked so pretty or so delicate. Nothing suggested any idea of danger. For many reasons I was, happily, not a witness to the rapid decline of her strength. I remember, however, going to see her once in the spring, and found her sitting in her arm-chair at the open window, looking at some flower-pots upon which the sun was shining brightly, and listening to a bird that chirped upon the roof. Agricole

was away, and she begged me to wait till his return. I was shocked at the paleness and angularity of her countenance. She seems to have had no suspicion of her fate—at least, would acknowledge none. She told me that in a week it was expected that her convalescence would begin, and that she was to ride out in a carriage to the Champs Elysées. I am not fond of lingering on these melancholy interviews. Poor Fifine! She asked me to go and buy her a doll, Agricole having no money just then. It would amuse her to make its dresses whilst she was getting well. I walked to the Passage Jouffroy, and soon returned with the toy. Agricole, who had come in, tried to thank me; but his lips quivered. Like myself, he saw in this going back to the tastes of childhood something like a fatal sign. Fifine thanked me very warmly, and at once began cutting up an old silk gown and some other articles of dress, "which she should never want again—because Agricole would give his *petite* quantities of new things, to reward her for getting well." The poor fellow took me into the next room, under pretence of showing me a pipe which he had blackened most successfully; but, in reality, to throw himself into a chair and sob like a child. I turned away, and, peeping through the window, saw Fifine hugging the doll against her bosom, and rocking herself to and fro in her arm-chair with a childish smile upon her countenance.

There was clearly no hope. I returned two or three times more, and then was suddenly chained to my room by a press of business. One day I received a large black-edged envelope, and, opening it with some anxiety, found therein the words,—"You are requested to attend the funeral of Mademoiselle Josephine ——, which will take place to-morrow, &c. &c." I should feel more comfortable in thinking of this story if I had been able to show my respect for this unhappy girl by following her to her grave; but something that appeared more important then, and seems quite trivial now, prevented me. Agricole soon came to see me—very pale, and subdued; and after a little sad talk said, in a husky tone of voice, "You try to persuade me that I have nothing to reproach myself with: but, to tell you the truth, I believe *she died out of the way.*" He is still pretending to study, and as he has not yet taken a new mistress may at last make some progress in knowledge. He will probably marry one of these days, and talk lightly of "his youthful follies." How long will it be before we learn that a being with an immortal soul is not the rattle with which we are permitted to make short and pleasant our early years?

CHAPTER IV.

Feminine Organisation of the French—Ethical Theories—Philosophical Sceptics—Religion and Morals—Feeling of Shame—Rules of Conduct—The Church and the Philosophers—Young Men adrift—Students, how their Morals are influenced—A simple Narrative—Mademoiselle Pauline—Influence of the Boulevard Ladies—A Heart in Danger—A knotty Question for the Law—Pauline at large—A new Friend—A Separation—An Arrangement—Influence of a Breakfast on Misery—Meeting in a Crowd—Marriage in Sight—Pauline and the People—Rise of Aristocracies—Origin of prevalent Ideas about Women—Noble Paternity of Vice—The Porter's Bell—Financiers—A queer Family—Seeing Life—Mothers and Sons—Illegitimate Children—Foundling Hospitals—Trade of Child-Exposers—Influence of Climate on Morality—Beauty of Natural Children—Example of the Old—Inheritance of the Past—M. Croquignole again—Who pays for the Toilettes at Longchamps?—A Plea for Education—Art of Government—Moralising by Force—Danger of Virtue—An over-zealous Bishop.

EVERY man in France—if I may judge from my experience and the whole tone of literature—has sought for a Fifine in his youth, or found an Adèle in his riper years. In conversation and writing people generally use the plural form, and enumerate their mistresses, brown and fair, with the compla-

cency of Master Abraham Cowley. Frenchmen will scarcely deny this statement. They like to appear in the character of conquering heroes. Mars is their model; and they are not averse to being caught in a net, that the resemblance may be complete. In no country, perhaps, do women exercise a greater influence in moulding the ductile materials of character. It has already been said that there is something feminine, not only in the minds, but in the physical organisation, of the French. Medical observers tell us, that the female sex lives more by the lungs—that is, "upon air"—than the male; and, pushing their speculations into the domain of fancy, add, that this is the case with the whole Gallic, as compared with the Germanic family. They aver that a Frenchman naturally requires less nourishment than we do; and state a fact, which I hardly know how to repeat, namely, that we have *one foot more of continent* than they. It is not surprising that after this the vulgar should believe that Englishmen are always eating.

In describing the formation of the French character, it is not necessary to insist much more than I have already done on the details of formal education. The real education of us all is, the experience we gain in early life of the rules according to which the majority of men govern their conduct. The theories of ethics current in any age receive

rather than impart influence; and this is the reason why religions are required to drive the world by menace, or attract it by promise, into the right path. Calm thinkers have often been puzzled by what appears to them a remarkable phenomenon in the history of the human mind—namely, that some of the best of men, quite irreproachable in manners, have not only been without the religious sentiment, but have been eager to destroy it in others. Their error seems to have arisen from an extreme appreciation of the beauty and an exaggerated estimate of the power of ethical truths. Not perceiving that these truths are of divine origin—being a sublime elaboration from the nature of things—they have made of them, as it were, mental idols—have worshipped them and obeyed their behests—and have wondered and grieved that the rest of mankind could not be satisfied with what satisfied them. If we carefully analyse their state of mind, however, we shall perhaps be convinced of what it is natural to suppose, that though they are not fit objects for the fury of bigots, or the contempt of those who have a brighter faith, they are scarcely without blame. They omit to seek in circumstances, or in a happy constitution of mind and body, for an explanation of the easy obedience they pay to laws which are immediately beneficial and agreeably imperative to them; and do not cultivate the sympathies by means of which

they might divine the sufferings of natures more impetuous, more loving, more greedy of enjoyment—above all, more tempted in the struggles of the world, and therefore more in want of guidance and of comfort. These men, correct and estimable as they are, are generally cold and disdainful of mankind.

Where the influence of religion is weak, or diverted by human subtleties, it is really surprising to see the debility of ethical theories. In every country we may take our opinion of the state of morals from the moralist in vogue. Larochefoucault might have written; but he would not have been read under a republic presided over by Washington. In France the opinions of society are perhaps more directly, than in any other, derived from every-day practice. Most men, when they have taken a wrong step, endeavour to conceal it; and though this conduct is open to the charge of hypocrisy, yet the result is good: for principles remain comparatively untouched, and the authority of parents, relatives, and friends, upon the young—that of one generation upon another—is unimpaired. The French are too vain to act in this wise. Being but slightly endowed with the feeling of shame, which they consider ridiculous, they often allow their life to be visible up to the limits of etiquette, and invent or adopt maxims to justify their acts. The extravagant ideas and situations which shock us in French litera-

ture, are often not the product of drunken dreams, but apologies either for what has been done or for what is desired.

The student, therefore, as soon as he has left his family or his preceptor, and finds himself in contact with the world, naturally begins to frame his acts and opinions by example rather than according to precept—the assistance of which, however, he does not wilfully decline. Nothing is so difficult as the application of a rule of conduct or a rule of art. All who aspire to write have studied—though, with an ingratitude which is part of their instruction, they rarely confess as much—the lessons of the rhetorical masters. But how many years pass away—what struggles of intellect are gone through—before they can pour a single thought into the mould which Art has prepared! Here, however, we have only to contend with the difficulty of adapting inert material to fitting forms. In life, not only have we to find what truth applies to what action, but we see coming reality through the disguising medium of our passions and fancy, and know what it is only when it has gone by. Few, therefore, shape their conduct according to theories; all, more or less, imitate.

In France, as we have seen, the prejudices of childhood are inculcated by the Catholic Church, which seems to allow much sin that there may be much forgiveness, and derives the sanction of all

actions from itself; or by the materialist philosophers of the schools, who indirectly exclude the idea of sin to substitute that of criminality: which substitution tends to the destruction of all religions—of all morality—and, consequently, of all freedom and civilisation. It is curious to see Absolutists and Liberals uniting to sap the bases of the notion of right, because it is incompatible with their pretensions and their theories. Prepared thus, young men are "set adrift in the world," as people say; that is, they at once begin to enter into all manner of relations with their fellow-creatures, and are called upon, under pain of ridicule, of discomfort, of loss of friends, of disappointment, perhaps of ruin, to adapt themselves at once, in a greater or less degree, to the ways of society. A few are shocked by the divergence of practice from precept—hold up their hands because selfishness, not sacrifice, is the order of the day—and become hermits, madmen, or reformers. The majority do as others do. Some push matters to their extreme consequences—boldly develope all the principles of egotism—look upon mankind as their prey—and ascend to the Scaffold or the Throne.

The greater number, however, as I have said, whilst pursuing knowledge as a means of distinction or profit, square their lives according to prevalent practice. Most students are entirely removed, not only

from family life, but from the more regulated regions of society; and led by taste, love of adventure, or necessity, find or form circles, into which they carry their poetry and enthusiasm, but from which they take incorrect notions of behaviour. I have already said a good deal of their manners and mode of life. At present it will be well to pursue the vein opened in a previous chapter, and show under what circumstances young men acquire their most important notions of morality. This will be a great step towards a right comprehension both of the present state of things in France and of the character of the nation in general. Indeed, without an accurate knowledge of the social position of women, and the forms of intercourse with them, it is impossible to trace the origin of the mental revolutions that precede and cause political revolutions.

I shall begin with a simple narrative, which I have constructed conscientiously, as if it were to be the basis of a judicial decision. What cross-questioning and criticism were necessary to dig these materials out of the mine of reality! It would have been easy to round off and adorn; but, although I admit that the truth of art is sometimes truer than the truth of fact, yet, as illustrations of manners, the anecdotes with which I strew these pages would be perfectly valueless if not scrupulously exact. I have generally abstained from borrowing instances, be-

cause I never could be sure what touches were to be attributed to imagination, what details were divined, and what simply reported. To be opulent in illustrations of this kind, I have written down partial biographies of most of the persons with whom I have come in contact; but I have not used them unless, opportunities of verification having been given, I could convince myself of their general truth. Real life is a succession of very simple incidents, so slowly developed that the actors cannot see the points of interest, and hesitate doubtfully whether to enumerate every meal, or to suppress everything but a marriage or a death. The people, when repeating traditions, in all countries have a wonderful way of concealing, as it were, mental history under material facts. It is sometimes difficult to strike at the real sense of what they say. In the same manner, when you ask unartificial men or women to tell what has happened to them, they often insist on points that serve them as tokens by which to remember.

Pauline came up from the country many years ago, immediately after her first communion—when she was dressed in a white frock, often made the text of allegorical regrets—and was apprenticed to a fashionable milliner established on the Boulevards, "in the second house from a certain street, exactly opposite the place where an accident happened in the year 18—," &c. For six months she had twenty

times the cause of complaint that had Ruth Hilton; that is, was ill-fed, over-worked, and sometimes beaten. She soon began to repine at her condition, and to look with contempt—this is her own statement, and no doubt true—on her simple cotton-print gown. Every time she went out in the evening she saw streaming along the Boulevards, dressed in silks, and satins, and cachemires, fine ladies, upon whom virtuous women looked with curiosity and dislike, and elegant men with admiration and familiarity. The whole tone of what society Pauline saw tended to develope her irregular impulses. She learned that the world despised not vice itself, but only ill-dressed vice. If she had been in another country and another class, she might have heard the most virtuous of women lingering dangerously in their talk on the incidents of royal amours. As it was, she only perceived that the plainly-clothed grisette was spoken of with contempt, whilst the dashing Lorette inspired a certain amount of respect. She was "a thing," the other a lady.

At this juncture the husband of Pauline's mistress —or rather Monsieur, as he was called: he who generally lived with Madame—cast eyes upon her and coveted her. He began by presents of lollypops and ended by promise of a gown,—a silk gown with flounces, and a bonnet to match. In this way he threw her mind into a strange flutter. I was glad

to receive so frank a confession, because a certain class of ladies, who have given the cue to some romancers, torment us with the idea that absolute purity, suddenly, by some abominable act, is often destroyed. All things are possible; but Pauline's account is more in accordance with nature. She admits that, in the absence of moral teaching, she began, without being conscious of what was taking place, to doubt the value of the few principles she possessed. What followed might have been brought before a jury, who would, of course, have acquitted; though women, who know the mysteries of their own nature, and say that even the mind may be violated, would have unmercifully condemned. In France, after the age of fifteen, a young girl's honour is entirely in her own keeping; and the law recognises no such crimes as seduction or breach of promise of marriage, nor does it allow paternity to be proved by oath or testimony. It would seem as if the code had been constructed for the protection of men of pleasure. Our Legislature has tried to escape this reproach, but there still, even with us, remains much to be done.

Next day Pauline ran away from the house, wandered about until she was hungry, thought of leaping into the Seine, and took a much more unfortunate step. Three months afterwards, however, she was rescued by a medical student, a friend of

Agricole's, who took her away and provided for her. During several years they lived together in that gipsy way which the French student has invented—feasting one day and starving another, alternating from shower to sunshine, until the time had passed when, according to the nature of things, their connexion was to come to a close. This *bon temps*—this period of jollity—might have lasted a year or so longer, had not Georges exhausted the patience or the resources of his parents by extravagance. They professed themselves satisfied that he had attained a proficiency in his art that would enable him to take charge of the health of the mountainous district in which he was born—where people died only of old age. Now it happened, that during the early term of their union M. Georges had caused his Pauline to go through the necessary course of studies to fit her to take a diploma as a *sage-femme*. When, therefore, in order to compel him to return home, his parents withdrew his monthly allowance, he rebelled at first, and resolved to live in Paris by his wits; whilst she determined to help by carrying on her profession. Thus they managed to rub on together for some time; and as I happened to see them in a moment of good fortune, it appeared to me that there never was a happier couple. But they were both of extravagant habits—both fond of pleasure; and Pauline was oftener found at the Chaumière than in

attendance on the industrious mothers of the neighbourhood. The consequence may be foreseen. Within six months all their furniture was sold, their clothes were pawned, and debts had accumulated; so that, after sulking for a week, during which he remained at home without a coat to his back, and after alluding several times to suicide, Georges came one morning to Pauline, and took both her hands in his, and cried, and sobbed, and asked her to give him an old shawl to wrap round his shoulders, that he might go that cold wintry night to a friend of his father's and borrow money sufficient to pay his fare in the diligence to T——. He had done his best, he said, to provide for her, and had failed. Alphonse had been with him that morning, and they had agreed on a project for the future. No matter what it was! Would she forgive him? This is a period which the grisette always foresees. Pauline remained in hysterics only five minutes. Then they embraced, and Georges went away wrapped in the old shawl, and returned to eat the fatted calf in his native mountains.

So far this is an ordinary episode in a student's life, and Pauline was not more unfortunate than her sisters. Indeed she had grounds for gratitude to Georges for having withdrawn her from an abyss. It appears, however, that the allusion to Alphonse revealed that he had advanced one step too far in

what is called knowledge of the world. That young man, who had emptied many a bottle of champagne with Pauline and her master, came in due time, and said that an old friend of his, a lawyer's clerk, wanted a companion. He was of delicate health, but had a fair income. Would she breakfast with him at one o'clock that day? Pauline fainted; but admits that she recovered in time to be dressed by half-past twelve. Her new acquaintance was handsome and foolish-looking. The wine flowed freely. She mixed a few tears with it as she told her story. But she had no definite means of livelihood, and was without courage to fight the fight of life alone. A morganitic marriage was soon agreed upon. It was celebrated in the thirteenth quarter of Paris. I had lost sight of her; and when M. —— introduced me to "his wife,"—*sa femme:* the expression is beautifully equivocal in French; so equivocal, that vulgar people say "my spouse;"—when, I say, I met Pauline in another position, some years afterwards, I had not yet learned how she had become a widow, nor was I indiscreet enough to inquire. My presence, however, recalled old times. She spoke of Georges at the first opportunity with a trembling voice, and frankly admitted that she had met him once in the street, handsomely dressed, and had accepted an invitation to dinner. M. —— found out this meeting, and beat his lady rather severely; but

she swore to him as to me, with a twinkle of confession, it is true, in her eyes, that the only crime of which she was guilty was to remember and weep over the days of her youth, when calculation entered not into her love, and when potatoes and salt eaten on a board supported by two pair of knees seemed more delightful to her than a royal banquet. I have since learned that M. —— has made a great advance in the world, and that Pauline queens it in a handsome apartment, has a *bonne,* and is aspiring to marriage.

Her aspiration is not unreasonable. I consider it to be rather creditable to the French than otherwise, that in many cases where an irregular union produces children, the law is called in to sanction the marriage which has already really taken place. As this does not happen until habit has rendered the couple inseparable, neither party is afterwards visited by regret. These marriages are, in fact, generally happy, if that name can be applied to the content, the absence of turbulent desires and wishes, which characterises those who, having exhausted their hearts in youth, find enjoyment in the cessation of pain and labour, relish small comforts and domestic triumphs, and can remember the past without any marked regret or retro-active jealousy.

It is a curious illustration of the origin of the aristocratic feeling that poor Pauline, who may be

32853

said almost to have been dragged through all the kennels of Paris, as soon as she was installed in a respectable apartment began to speak with contempt of "the people"—"*ce vilain peuple!*" Of course, she is now a violent advocate of the Empire; and there is no reason, if this state of things lasts, why she should not found a noble family, and be remembered in tradition. Under Napoleon I., as it has already been remarked, the nobility of the sword were often accompanied by ladies whose language betrayed their origin. The wife of a Maréchal used to employ an expression equivalent to "Here's a go!" in English; and in the present day the Princess —— has been heard to say (a free translation), "Where is them tables?" However, there is no reason why such mothers should not produce heroic descendants, since it is highly probable that most aristocracies have sprung from similar "Newcomes."

From what I have said, it will be seen that it is as impossible to describe French manners without speaking of the system of having mistresses, as it is to describe the East without alluding to polygamy. The system itself has its origin more in tradition and custom than in temperament. It is a heritage left by the old monarchy, whose partisans may now enjoy the malicious pleasure of seeing their example destroying the energies of the generation who have displaced them. If any one would condemn himself

to follow the prevalent ideas about the fair sex up to their source, he would probably find them coming direct from the *petites maisons* of the last century; not by means of literature, but by verbal tradition. It is true that young Calicots—which is the generic nickname for shop-boys—when they are enthusiastically licentious, exclaim, "*C'est Régence!*" meaning, that their doings remind them of the abominations of the Regency, of which they have read in M. Alexandre Dumas, and feeling secretly flattered at the thought that they can be as immoral as princes. But the doctrine and etiquette of vice has been handed down, and constantly practised, from generation to generation. A Marquis, who has taken up the cause of divine right, laments the vulgarisation of what "men call gallantry" in these days. The thing itself is a matter of course; but, instead of making rendezvous at pretty little houses in the faubourgs of Paris, the ladies of our modern times have invented what is called "the porter's bell," a kind of gong which announces to the mistress of the house, if she be *en tête-à-tête*, that her husband is coming! This ludicrous complaint is too illustrative of French manners to be omitted. It seems to me a perfect gem, and quite bearing upon what I say; namely, that the theory and practice of intrigue is precisely the same now as under Louis XV. As to the gentility of the form, that is another question,

which the noble adepts may decide. One thing is certain, that the financiers have beat the aristocracy out of the field in ordinary society; and that not more than half of the famous "What sons of what fathers!" can still be true. Even a grisette speaks with perfect contempt of a baron; and keeps her mercenary heart for a banker, and her real affections for some plebeian student who may one of those days preside at the Court of Cassation.

The following facts have been already written down, but they are so true to reality that I repeat them, with the variations of my own experience. A good while ago a needy woman, with a handsome daughter, to whom she could not give a dowry, hit out a plan of life which has found imitators. It is as follows:—Some young man known to be wealthy—a stockbroker, a merchant, even a count as a last resource—is pitched upon, and invited as a friend to the house. Secret understandings are often come to, but generally the bargain is only tacit. Little parties are given, at which the young man appears as a suitor. It is whispered about that he is inspired by a romantic passion, but that his parents refuse the necessary consent. They are waiting for better times and the courtship goes on meanwhile. The young man begins by offering presents of little nick-nacks, and then ventures on a shawl, a bonnet, or a gown. The young lady keeps up appearances, regrets her

fault, and makes a point of asking once a-month if the hard-hearted parents have at length yielded? By this time the character of the intimacy has become pretty evident to all. The young man takes out Eugénie or Pulcherie to walk alone.—There is one couple passing under my window at this very moment.—He has a key of the apartment, and by degrees assumes the air of a master. At last he disappears. The young girl puts on mourning. Melancholy inhabits the house for a month or two. A brain-fever has blighted her hopes! But another suitor soon appears, and then another and another, with increasing rapidity. The glass of the eighth Banquo is always in the hands of the last comer; and at length the young lady—now no longer very young—sinks to the position of an ordinary Lorette, or meets some coffee-house keeper, who is of opinion that she still looks well by candle-light and sticks her behind his counter.

If these things took place in the retired quarters of society, it would be well to pass them over in silence; but they are so common and patent that they meet one at every corner in life, and in every page of literature. Even mothers give their general consent to the system in the case of their sons, provided particular instances can be kept from their knowledge. They almost all admit the necessity, and even the propriety, of a young man "seeing life."

I believe the idea of this necessity is so rooted, that any bridegroom who should be believed not to have passed through the ordeal would be looked upon with contempt by the bride herself. Mothers have been heard to say: "Provided our son is an honest man—provided he makes his way in the world by legitimate means and does not destroy his health, we do not expect from him the reserve of the young maiden; which would, indeed, be ridiculous. The man who has not committed one or two faults of this kind, and who has preserved his purity, can only have done so from indolence of heart, from an indifference which places him in an inferior rank. Generous sentiments, youthful ardour, energy, fire, co-exist with many faults; and, in fact, where these faults are not, there cannot be those qualities."

It is, perhaps, superfluous to appeal to statistics for proofs of what I have advanced. However, it is worth saying that above seventy thousand natural children are born annually in France, and only two-thirds of those born in Paris are legitimate. These astounding statements, however, are accounted for, in a great measure, by the fact that workmen are deterred from marriage, partly by the fear of expense, partly by theories prevalent among them, partly from their love of a vagabond state of life. However, the majority of the contributions to the

Foundling Hospital are offsprings of temporary unions, such as I have described. The work-people do not generally desert their children. Most of the foundlings are taken to the hospital by *sages-femmes*, who make a trade of receiving women into their houses and require to be paid for each abandonment. Some of them have been known to earn from ten to twenty thousand francs a-year by this infamous trade, and it may easily be imagined that they rather encourage than dissuade hesitating mothers. In the provinces, various villains have raised the occupation of Child-Exposer into a profession. They undertake for a certain price to convey infants to the nearest hospital, and receive for each expedition a sum varying from thirty to a hundred francs. Two or three have succeeded in setting up considerable establishments, with vehicles attached, plying regularly to the Foundling Hospitals. Escaped convicts, who have found this a congenial occupation, have been known to intimidate seduced girls into giving up their children, and have even taken them by force, threatening ruin if they resisted. Cases have been brought before the law-courts.

Having trodden thus far over this painful ground, I must add, that not unmarried people only expose their children, but married also. The motives are generally misery or debauchery. This crime is also more common in the north than in the south. The

wine-growing countries, if not more chaste, comply more regularly with the other dictates of morals. Is there a connexion between beer and debauchery? In Strasbourg, it is said that most girls have a child or two before marriage. Some are kept by the parents, others are cast away. The influence of climate on morality and virtue is a curious subject of research, but has hitherto been treated in too material a point of view. The departments in which fewest natural children are born are those in the west, but this arises from the dissemination of the people; so that a new man is an ally, not an enemy. In the south, crimes against modesty are committed in summer; which is carelessly urged to prove that we obey the sun in our impulses, whereas the hot months in vine-countries are months of comparative idleness. In the north, crimes against property are committed in January and December; of course, because then there is less work and more misery. Everywhere infanticide is commoner in winter than in other seasons. This crime is on the increase in France; but, as is well known, the system of sending infants to the Foundling Hospitals has always been only another form of infanticide. Very few are reared. Some jocular writers and poets have talked of the beauty and strength of natural children. Most of the girls placed in the Foundling Hospitals are ugly and uninteresting. They are all destined, as a

matter of course, to the humblest position in life. In Moscow the case is different, and if a child exhibits any remarkable capacity it receives a good education.

One feature, and the most disagreeable, in French manners—and perhaps this applies in some degree to all countries—is, that the example of immorality is given by the aged to the young, who are thus almost forced to receive the impure inheritance of the old régime. It cannot be too often repeated, that the code of morals now practically adopted in France was created in the court of the Bourbons, where the demoralising tendency inherent in all forms of monarchy produced, perhaps, its most extreme results. It was easily propagated by example in a nation prepared by Catholicism and vanity. Writers patronised by the aristocracy became its apologists and its apostles. Men are now dying off who studied it in their youth, and have practised it ever since for the edification of their posterity. Even still are to be met with in Paris old sinners, like M. Croquignole, who maintain with cynical effrontery that there is nothing in this life to be sought but pleasure, nothing in the next but repose. This old gentleman, the last time I saw him, was eyeing a grisette's ankle through a gold eyeglass; and observed to me, in a tone of profound conviction, "I had rather be the sixtieth lover of a

woman than the first, because the first ousts nobody, and the sixtieth ousts fifty-nine." Individual instances are perhaps of no weight. But who pays for those dashing toilettes that are by degrees driving modest women away from Longchamps? Not the youth of the schools—who, even in their faults, mix a certain amount of poetry and decorum, and who are preserved by their poverty if not by their pride,—but grave men, occupying positions in society, —ministers, generals, judges, bankers, successful literary men, stockbrokers, the *élite* of the middle-classes. The police make it a rule to open all letters addressed to known Lorettes, and to take the names of their friends, so that it could create prodigious scandal if it chose.

It has already been observed, that men choose their pleasures oftener from their opinions than their passions. If this be true, those who plead for education as the one thing needful, who make it a necessary preliminary to political reform, would have every argument in their favour, if it were not for the melancholy fact, that the general spread of virtue in all countries would threaten the existence of certain institutions and interests. Morality interferes chiefly with our pleasures, in which, as statesmen well know, we spend the activity that would otherwise periodically explode in "thorough reformations." I have already mentioned the wonderful political

sagacity of the present Emperor, in proposing, if necessary, to occupy his subjects with the disastrous passions of the gambling-house. To govern men is required a profound knowledge of human nature. Inferior agents of Louis Napoleon, totally misunderstanding his principles, and thinking themselves bound to be arbitrary without an object, have, in various places throughout the country, presumed to meddle with the amusements of the population; forbidding, for example, girls under twenty to enter the public dancing-places. These attempts to moralise by force are evidently suggested by the Legitimist party and the clergy, who are not aware that they may introduce an element of perturbation into society. The upper classes and their spokesmen are everywhere inclined to fall into the singular mistake of forbidding the people to indulge in the same vices as themselves. A nation of Puritans, however, is ill-fitted for the yoke. The Bishop of Cambrai has recently threatened to deprive all those who live in a state of concubinage of Christian burial. This zeal, quite justified by the canons of the church, will scarcely be imitated. Nothing could be more impolitic than for the Catholic clergy, after having allied itself with an usurpation which can only exist as long as conscience finds no voice, to affect rigidity in matters of morals; for they are by this time so far

compromised in support of the present system, that the slightest reawakening to the dignity of human nature in any large class may be fatal both to their protégé and to themselves.

CHAPTER V.

General Position of Women—An Odd Anecdote—Esprit de Corps—Virtue—Basis of Religion—A Political Illustration—National Character—Fatalism—Theory of Rehabilitation—Public Opinion with regard to Women—Female Emancipation—Oriental Theories—Liberty and Seclusion—The Married and the Unmarried—Girls, why watched—Artificial Training—The Empress—English and French Systems—Course of Instruction—A Philippic against Crochet-work—Music—German Songs—National Prejudice—Education of Women of the Humbler Classes—The Sisters—Immoral Influence of Catholicism—Convents and Boarding-schools—Prizes in Public—Rewards for Virtue—Champfort—Pension St. Denis.

But it is not sufficient to show that all or most young men, under circumstances more or less demoralising, form irregular unions in their youth; and that, in fact, the Hetaira in France, as in old Greece, is a recognised element in society. We must also look upon this fact in its relations to the general position of women, and to the ideas both of moralists and the public in relation to the fair sex. Both from want of space and other reasons I cannot enter into all the details necessary for completeness, but

perhaps thinking persons will find some addition to their materials in the following chapters.

A woman whose husband had ill-treated her once told a gossip of her acquaintance, that she would kneel down in prayer and complain to Our Saviour. "Don't," said the gossip: "address the Virgin Mary. Men, of course, always take each other's part." This anecdote illustrates very exactly the opinion which women are taught in France to hold of the relative positions of the two sexes. You may often, indeed, hear them maintain, that it is the natural impulse of men to attack and the business of women to defend themselves. They rarely appeal to absolute principles of morality. The whole is reduced to a question of prudence; and, as is frequently the case with us, the evil dictates of the heart getting the upper hand of gospel precepts, the fault of a poor victim of seduction is visited with undying wrath, whilst all manner of excuses are found for the rake. I am inclined to think, that unmerciful ladies of this kind have had experience of how easy it is to combine the pleasures of vice with the profits of reputation; and that their anger is directed rather against the innocence, or want of tact, that led to discovery, than against the sin itself. In France, at any rate, women have a wonderful *esprit de corps*. Like priests, they protect the failings of their fellows until proof is too obvious; and

then lead the cry against the silly thing that has suffered itself to be caught.

The course of my speculations leads me to treat of the unpleasant part of this subject first. However, I have been sufficiently emphatic—some will say, sufficiently simple—in avowing my belief in the existence of a great amount of female virtue, even in France. To believe in excellence is the first step towards being excellent. It is very important, therefore, without regard to the satirical sneers of *roués*, to insist on this part of the truth. I observe that the severest censors of morals, perhaps because they direct too much of their attention to the diseases of our nature, become gradually incredulous of good as they advance in life; but if evil be universal, it is scarcely worth while to condemn. Bring the cup and the wreath of flowers, and let Lais cast aside her veil. If ethics treat of duties that are never complied with, and are conversant only with beings that do not exist, they are a romance more wearisome than Ossian, and nearly as uninstructive as Telemachus.

The basis of all religions is a theory of the composite nature of man, the varied play of his passions, his conflicting impulses, his spiritual aspirations, and gross appetites; and this theory is, after all, the most cheerful one that we can adopt. It shows, that in no mind is evil so triumphant that good may

seek in vain for a footing; and indeed suggests, that when corruption has reached its utmost limit, the next step is not death, but a reaction towards a better frame of mind. Though I admit, therefore, that in the conspicuous places of society for many years past a degraded position has been assigned to women in France; though I maintain that, except in individual cases, where common sense makes a successful insurrection, they are so regarded, so taught, so treated by legislation and public opinion, that their characters are deteriorated, and their influence becomes rather pernicious than beneficial, yet I should be sorry to despair of the prospects of morality and civilisation.

I shall take an illustration from another order of things. I believe the French, by their actual character and by their corruption, to be liable to fall, and to remain under the curse of monarchical government; yet I cannot blame their more virtuous citizens for constantly struggling to establish a republic, or any system under which they may be compelled to learn the science of affairs by transacting them. Liberty has a corner in every mind; and I have heard even Tory gentlemen threaten insurrection in defence of their privileges. Nothing can be more immoral, therefore, than to imitate the wiscacres who go about saying, that Frenchmen are only fit to be governed by a Great Sword. A Great

Sword never taught anything but cowardice and immorality. We are placed on this earth to learn that which is good, and to assist others in exercising the same right. All honest men, therefore, though compelled by circumstances and nationality to stand aloof, are bound to give their sympathies to a minority, however small, that from time to time endeavours to save itself and the large mass of its fellow-citizens from the degradation, which is only the more deplorable if it has its chief source in national character,—although national character, be it remembered, is not permanent, for its definition includes qualities that appear and disappear, acquire adjuncts and developments, and in different ages combine to produce a totally different general result. I reject the fatalist theory altogether. There are crises in the history of every nation when individual will may liberate and give expansion to our best instincts, or suppress and stifle every generous quality. In 1848, France was evidently incapable of self-government; but if the frightened National Guards of Boulogne had fired low into the water some years before, a Washington would have found the field clear.

The same train of reasoning will lead us not to pass irrevocable condemnation on the state of female morality in France. It is, perhaps, as bad as the instruction of philosophers and priests could make

it; for a bad woman is the most artificial being on the face of the earth: but all is not, and cannot be, corrupt. If there did not remain a single faithful married woman in France, virtue would take refuge amongst the unmarried classes, and Magdalens would invite their sisters to repentance. It may be a vague sentiment of this truth — exaggerated into a criminal absurdity — that has, as I have said, infested French literature of late with luxurious lucubrations on what is called "the rehabilitation of the courtesan;" which expression, by the way, like several others now in common use, has been taken from the vocabulary of the St. Simonians. These strange speculators, therefore, have left their footmarks in the French language.

Perhaps many of the facts which I shall have to relate may, taking into account the different form of civilisation, have their counterpart in England. At any rate, I think that most persons have come to the conclusion that there is something radically wrong in the state of public opinion with reference to the treatment and education of women in all civilised countries. I say, education and treatment, because we educate them that they may submit to the treatment. Many female writers, in France more especially, have "protested," as they express it, in favour of their own sex, and have been treated with not undeserved

ridicule and contempt. It is a misfortune, incident to their position, that women can scarcely expose their grievances without losing our respect in their own persons, and separating themselves, as it were, from their clients so far that they must be disavowed. The truth is, that it is *our* duty to begin the reform; and there is no better way of doing so than by examining into the state to be reformed.

Before leaving these speculations, which I did not intend to introduce, may I be allowed to say that I neither admire nor appreciate any of the systems or theories that have been set up under the banner of "emancipation?" If any of the democratic principles which I have avowed seem to lead, directly or indirectly, to a female insurrection, I hereby utterly disclaim them. I have got a crushing demonstration in my desk of the fact that women are not, and cannot be, citizens—that they form no part of the body politic—that they are incapable of civic rights—that they are above or below man—and that there is a great probability of their being guests from heaven, of whose divine character we are not aware. I should no more think of giving them a vote than to thee, Spirit of the Evening Star, if thou shouldst descend from thy sphere, where I see thee twinkle archly every time I look up through the window in search of a thought or an expression!

The way in which women are regarded in France

seems to me quite Oriental in principle. They are allowed, it is true, considerable liberty when they have reached the married state: but this is because there is a reaction too strong to resist against the confinement to which they are subject as girls. We must not, however, exaggerate the liberty French wives enjoy. Legislation is more unfavourable to them even than in England, and public opinion and manners greatly circumscribe their field of action. What is called their liberty is the license they take to receive male visitors, their husbands being away —to go to parties alone, and attract gallant attentions—that is, in fact, they choose to make themselves accessible to intrigue. There is nothing in the mechanism of our society to prevent Englishwomen doing likewise. The common antithesis, therefore—except, perhaps, in certain fashionable circles which never represent a nation—is entirely false. French wives have no franchises that English women do not exercise in a greater degree. The only difference is, that the latter make a better use of their freedom.

What has led some people into this error is the contrast that really exists in France between the life of the girl and that of the woman. The one being ridiculously confined, the other, at first sight, appears the extreme of uncontrol: and this brings me back to what I was saying of the Oriental theory of women

held in France. Eastern maidens are watched by their mothers with excess of severity, not only because it is believed that danger may befall them, but because the slightest hint that surveillance has been relaxed for a moment, even though no harm may be known of, is sufficient to destroy all prospect of marriage. This is precisely the case in France. A mother who should allow her daughter once to walk out with a young man, or should allow a young man not of the family once to sleep in the house, might as well accept the most degrading epithet in the language. No exigencies can be more severe than those of a battered rake, who has at length made up his mind to run the risk of matrimony, as to the modest demeanour of his betrothed. He watches, with practised eye, to catch the slightest gesture, the slightest glance, that may contradict his ideas of innocence and candour; and has a certain rigid theory, according to which he judges of the way the young lady walks, of the degree of her elasticity—a little stiffness and awkwardness are a *sine quâ non* in a complete virtue—of the practice she may have attained in sending glances through her eyelids. Many a poor girl, yielding to her irrepressible frankness, has been condemned for looks and acts that would fill wise inexperience with joy; and I believe that most of the bitter accusations circulated in genteel society against the unfortunate Empress of

France may be traced simply to the fact that she despised the hypocritical demureness of "marriageable daughters" in genteel society. Few English girls who go to that country of Semblance escape similar slanders. The men cannot believe in Virtue allied with ease of manners, and augur ill even of a joyous laugh. The consequence is, that mothers, in self-defence, are obliged to give a false direction to the education of their daughters. They have constructed an art of modesty, a theory of reserve, to meet the tastes of the marrying public. The accomplishments of shyness and timidity are taught according to precise rules, just like music and dancing. This explains why nearly all French girls have the same demeanour, walking, when in public, with their eyelids on their cheeks, never entering into conversation other than monosyllabic, and carefully eschewing, even in most familiar circles, any exhibition of that open-hearted joy which makes the society of their English sisters so delightful.

Of late years some mothers, disgusted with the hypocritical absurdity of all this, have begun to adopt a system half-way between French seclusion and English freedom. They tell me, however, that, though they admire our courage, they could not venture to allow, for example, even two young girls to walk out without a chaperon; and one especially has ceased to go into society, because

"her daughter is too old to be left alone and too young to be taken out." Any attempt at change must, indeed, fail, until public opinion is purified; otherwise many innocent girls may have their prospects ruined by prejudice. According to the prevalent theory—which, however, is often contravened—a young girl should never be out of sight of her mamma. Even in humble life this strictness is often attempted, but cannot, of course, be maintained.

From what I have heard and seen, it appears to me that the whole system of female education—being influenced by this desire to bring up girls that may be easily disposed of in the market matrimonial—is wrong in France; as it may be, for that matter, in England, too—at least, to a certain extent. Young ladies, among other things, are taught a thing called crochet-work, which, I am afraid, will some day be introduced amongst us. As a warning to mothers, I will describe it. It is the art of seeming to be employed for a long time, and of producing a result of the least possible value: it is an invention by which young girls, fancying they are doing something useful and elegant, are induced to fritter away all the hours they might devote to improving their minds and making themselves agreeable companions. I believe it was first found out in a moment of inspiration by a stupid man, who was afraid of having a wife cleverer than himself. He

learned—whether from above or below I cannot tell —that, by this means, fine, healthy, intelligent maidens, could be reduced to a state bordering on idiotcy. It was also suggested to him, that, to keep women virtuous, they must be given occupation; and as he, above all things, esteemed virtue—or rather innocence, which is not quite synonymous—he greedily seized on the expedient. Unhappy man! Women are "frail," to use the absurd old word, nine times out of ten, because their hearts and minds are not occupied; and you put into their hands a needle and a bit of wool! If I were a Lovelace, I should never think of addressing a mother employed in making shirts or mending stockings; for these humble things have associations with the whole circle of domestic happiness. But crochet-work! "Madam, is this the end and aim of the existence of an immortal being? What duties is it connected with—what affections does it satisfy? It is a sort of delicate treadmill, by which men who despise you try to keep you from mischief. What respect can be entertained for your character by those who leave your virtue to this frivolous protection?" I am sure I could go on very eloquently; and that the crochet-work would soon fall on the lady's lap.

Music also enters greatly into female education; and as aptitude is not considered, and as girls are

taught to play and sing as they are taught to wear their bonnets—because it is the fashion—I signalise this as another dismal fault, which I think has already crossed the Channel. Indeed, I am quite sure that English young ladies, who have no more voice than Tom Pipes, have at various times seemed to challenge me to meet them by moonlight; which I have always declined—of course, without giving the reason—namely, that I would rather see them engaged in learning the music of affection, the riches of a kind intonation which may be acquired in one lesson. It is merely necessary to be affectionate and kind. I have heard young wenches warble very pathetically some ditty, the chorus of which ends "My mother," uttered in the most dreary accents of fondness; and then say, or look, "I sha'n't," in answer to some maternal injunction. In France, German songs are now fashionable, and series of consonants proceed from young ladies' mouths as paper-twists from those of conjurers; and everybody—such is the influence of fashion—exclaims, "What a sweet language!" *Apropos* of singing, it is a curious observation to make, showing the tyrannical power of prejudice, that when a Frenchman hears an English song he immediately notices its hissing sound, whilst Scotch or Irish pieces are applauded invariably. A lady was once singing "Love not, love not." Somebody

asked me the subject and origin, and I said it was a Highland melody, which information proved the signal of a noisy burst of enthusiasm.

However, I must not attempt to fill up the great outline of "The Manners and Customs of Paris." Luckily, my pretensions are less ambitious. I shall say generally that, taking in the whole country, the formal education of girls is, perhaps, better than that of boys. Statistics may contradict me; but, as far as my personal experience goes, the women write better, and with more ease, than the men, and are more capable in accounts. Amongst the humbler classes, an immense number of girls are sent to be educated by the Sisters, because it is admitted—which is a great sign of contempt—that religion is good for women, however useless it may be for men. The Sisters are very well intentioned, and do their best to attract pupils. Their instruction is gratuitous; which circumstance, in a great measure, accounts for the tolerance of even infidel parents. Respectable tradesmen's wives have admitted to me, that all they know they learned "*chez les Sœurs.*" This is rather a misfortune than otherwise; for these excellent women think it their duty to inculcate the great idea which is at the bottom of all the immorality of the French—of all their wrong appreciations of themselves and others—namely, that right is not absolute, but dependent upon precept, or rather

command. Simple-minded girls early learn to look upon a priest as the incarnation of the moral law, from which the step is easy to believing in no morality at all. Indeed, Catholicism has been often reduced, in defending itself, to maintain that, if the Church were removed, there would be nothing to guide men but their beastly instincts, and that horrible thing called Reason. Without being supplied with any axioms to that effect, girls are taught, in real good faith, and with the best possible intentions, to depend entirely on priestly advice for rules of conduct. In scolding infants for wrong-doing, they are told that the terrible priest will be offended, or the good priest will be grieved; and thus the two passions of fear and affection are suborned, as it were, to let the enemy within the walls. The pernicious effect of this teaching may be traced everywhere.

A great number of young ladies are educated in convents, from which they are often transferred suddenly into the noise and bustle of the world, where they find a husband ready to greet them. Marrying gentlemen, looking upon matters from only one point of view, are quite delighted to receive a bride from the convent; for they know that, in spite of libellous accusations, the stories of Boccaccio can scarcely be repeated in modern times; and that there are ninety-nine chances to one that they will find perfect phy-

sical purity, which, as in all immoral countries, is chiefly prized by the French. On this account, not only do mothers, as I have said, watch their daughters carefully, but boarding-schools are surrounded with so many precautions, that they offer nearly the same security as convents. Elopements of school-girls may be said to be unknown in France. In many cases the virginity of the mind is not so well preserved as men would desire; but even here we must guard against exaggeration. The point for criticism is, that though young girls are kept really innocent, they are not supplied with principles for their guidance, and are prepared rather to give inexpressible satisfaction on the threshold of real life than to deserve permanent affection and esteem.

Up to 1812 it was the custom, both in the case of boy and girl schools, to distribute the prizes in public. At that time the custom was suppressed, in the case of the girls, as it was found to be injurious to modesty. This reform, however, was not the result of any expression of public opinion, but was brought about by the arbitrary interference of the Prefect of the Seine. I may here remark that the French have a strong tendency to depend, for the improvement both of children and grown-up men, on the efficacy of prizes. At the Revolution, when the idea was first admitted that virtue might be a good and useful

thing in a state, very well-meaning men determined to make it the object of reward. In many cities the custom still remains of distributing what are called "prizes of virtue." People are paid by medals and applause for any remarkable development of the natural affections; but a keen writer has remarked, "It seems to me that filial love has grown feebler since it has been so much praised as a wonderful thing." At the time of the establishment of these prizes the wit Champfort violently attacked the system, saying, "Let us render this homage to virtue, to suppose that the poor man also can be paid by its exercise; that, like the rich man, he has an opulent and solvable conscience; and that he also sometimes feels the necessity of placing a good action between him and heaven." These remarks, however, were of no avail. The system was not carried out to the extent at first contemplated; but I saw the other day an announcement in the papers that two young girls of the Pension St. Denis had received the Fontaine prize for filial virtue. The most absurd part of the transaction is, that outward manifestations are generally adduced to justify the giving of a crown. Regan and Gonerill would not have been without their reward in this country.

CHAPTER VI

Treatment of Infants — Nurses — A Fortunate Beggar — Cost of Nurses—Their Influence on Character — Governesses—Story of Eugénie and Marie — Going to Mass — An Intrigue in a Church — Aristocracies — English Prudery and French Immorality — Before and After Marriage — Girls of the Poorer Classes—War against Modesty—Literature read by Grisettes—Story of Amélie — Influence of Female Occupations — Dressmakers—The Limits of Knowledge—Indigent Men and Women —Why Women take Lovers—Virtuous Courtesans and French Romancers.

To impart a proper idea, however, of the way in which female character is formed in France, it is necessary to say something of the treatment of infants, which acts in two ways: first, as an example, teaching aspirant mothers how to behave; and in the second place, physically and morally prepares the young generation to imitate its predecessor. The effect of the preaching of Jean Jacques Rousseau against the custom of sending children out to nurse was at first very great. It became the fashion for many fine ladies to suckle their own infants. Indeed, at that time, it was only to this class that his preachings applied. The common people then fol-

lowed the dictates of nature. By degrees, maternal zeal died away, and soon the woman of the world, yielding to her innate love of pleasure, again abandoned her babes to hired nurses. When the bourgeoisie began to imitate their "betters" in all things, they were careful not to leave out this point of resemblance; and at last the workwoman, wishing to ape the middle classes, ceased also to suckle her little ones. Now-a-days most women who can afford it abstain from the maternal duty. I know an instance of a blind beggar who pipes on the Pont des Saints Pères, and is married to a very pretty woman: she lives in the next house to mine, on the first floor, and works as a milliner. Her first child is now out at nurse, at the rate of fourteen francs a-month. It was originally put into the hands of a woman who neglected it; and I am told that the father, on going to "see" it, as he said, at the Nurse-office, at once perceived, by the mere touch, that it was not properly cared for, and insisted on a change. He seems, by the way, to make a good thing of his piping, for he lives in a style that many respectable workpeople would envy.

The nurses are generally countrywomen, who, to gain a miserable sum of from fourteen to twenty-five francs a-month, bring up their own children by hand, and feed those of the townspeople on the nourishment thus fraudulently obtained. My port-

ress sends her children to the country, and pays twenty-five francs. The price decreases in proportion to the distance from Paris. Healthy young girls who have had a misfortune are often induced to send their babes to the Foundling Hospital, and are taken home by wealthy families and coddled for a time as the most precious part of the household. All their caprices are attended to, for fear that their young charges may suffer. I know of a lady who, having anticipations of an increase of her family, actually said to a fresh and cheerful-looking young girl, "What a pity we did not think of it in time! you might have nursed my child." The tender mother in expectation never reflected or cared what evil influence this remark might produce.

I believe it cannot be denied, that what may be called physical character—by which I mean the sum of all the instincts and aptitudes which directly develope themselves irrespective of moral and religious education, whose business is to supply principles that guide and curb—greatly depends on the foster-mother. Perhaps it would be too much to say, that she who has fed at the breast of Phryne must pursue the same career; but the mental purity of a nurse is not indifferent. At any rate, who would not prefer to look upon a maiden who had drank the stream of life that nature had provided than on one who had been cast before some doubtful source not

opened for her—some troubled cistern for travellers by the wayside? I do not mean to imply that French nurses are habitually chosen among immoral classes, though this is too often the case; nor do I pretend, that because a young girl has been seduced therefore her contact is corrupt: but I know a frightful instance in which the consequences of a careless choice were afterwards made manifest in misery, that gave occasion to painful calumnies and ended in death.

In many cases amongst fashionable people, the account which I have given of the surveillance exercised by mothers over their daughters does not apply. When the child is taken out of the hands of the nurse, it passes into those of some light *femme de chambre*, who, without any evil intention, instils notions and suggests habits that a little lady might well be without. Afterwards a governess is chosen, who is supposed to possess certain accomplishments, but into the finer parts of whose moral character little inquiry is made. Apparent good conduct is sufficient. Mademoiselle Honorine, who was seriously compromised in the society of my little friend Tom Pouce, is now engaged in superintending the education of the daughter of a tradesman whose wealth places him in the highest circles. Very often a mother of this rank takes little notice of her child until she begins to think of marrying her.

A story is related of two young ladies named Eugénie and Marie, intimate friends, who were almost always left by their mothers under the care of a couple of governesses of doubtful antecedents. These, in their turn, used to abandon their charges to themselves, and go out in search of pleasure and amusement. The girls had heard somehow of the fascinating balls frequented by the young students, and determined to take advantage of their liberty and see a little of what is called life. It was Carnival time. They stole out, went to a shop where costumes may be hired at so much a-night, and having procured two dominoes hastened away to the Chaumière. They had resolved only to look on, but of course they danced. The first night went off well. They had gone with the intention of satisfying their curiosity—that was all. But the second time—for they soon returned—led to the making of acquaintances, and, in fact, they never went back to their homes at all. Marie became one of the most famous Lorettes in Paris, and Eugénie was considered fortunate because she settled down to be the mistress of a medical student.

Under ordinary circumstances, the first opportunity which a young lady has of going out comparatively unguarded is when she begins to be religious. It has been observed, that at seventeen a vast number of girls take to going to mass every

morning. In the upper ranks, maidens, whose characters would be considered to be lost for ever if they went out with a male friend, are allowed to go, attended by their *bonnes*, to church, when all the rest of the family is in bed. Now, without supposing the *bonne* to be corrupted, it is easy to see that if the Oriental system of seclusion be advisable, all its good effects may in this way be destroyed. The other day an ugly young lady, to whom, in spite of her wealth, no suitors of her own class came, grew suddenly pious, or rather determined to go out every morning to the church of St. Thomas d'Aquin with her *bonne* in search of a lover. Her very first expedition was successful. A poor shopman—one of the supernumeraries of a ready-made clothes establishment—who probably was on his way to church on the supposition that his handsome face and fine figure might bring him good luck, attracted the eyes of the sentimental excursionist. She felt that the richness of her costume and the presence of a servant would overawe his youth and poverty, so she condescended to make the first advances, and signed to him to follow her. In the church she told her *bonne*, a simple Norman girl, to pray in a chapel, and strolled away to a sombre corner to commune with the young supernumerary, who soon understood that he might reasonably indulge in visions of fortune. The young lady appears to have been of a very decided character,

and, having once made up her mind, determined to force her parents to give their consent to a marriage. At the last moment her mother, who had all the prejudices and unscrupulousness of aristocracy, brought forward an old marquis, whose only fortune was his title; but Mademoiselle Mélanie de ——, who, after all, had a good deal of rectitude and honesty about her, resolved to keep to her first choice—threatened to give food for scandal—and in a very short time the young supernumerary, having treated his fellows in the shop to a parting dinner, started with his ugly, but wealthy bride, for Italy.

Though there was somewhat too much of deliberation in all this transaction, it would be fortunate for the remnants of the noble families in France if such little accidents were oftener to happen. At any rate, if the counts and marquises of the present day were to imitate our aristocracy, and marry from the middle classes, they might have some hope that their race might rise from the wretched physical degradation to which it is fallen. With few exceptions, there could not be found a meaner-looking set of men than those who hover about the Faubourg St. Germain, and look upon themselves still as the true representatives of France. I once heard a man, with a particle in his name, indignantly repudiate the idea that there were thirty-five millions of Frenchmen. "There were, at most," he said, "some ten or twelve thou-

sand families to whom that name could properly be applied." I believe that, in his mind, this was an apology for the emigration of the nobility in the old Revolution.

From what I have already said, it appears that many mothers care little to educate their daughters, except to prepare them for marriage by some superficial accomplishments, and by furnishing them with certain appearances of innocence. However, amongst the genteeler classes, great care is taken not to offend maidenhood by any improper expression or equivocal word. The French, who are so unmerciful on our prudery — who make it an accusation against us that we dislike indecency — whose wit is unsparing and inexhaustible when they dilate on the category of ideas which, according to them, we call "shocking," — endeavour to draw a *cordon sanitaire* round their unmarried girls; but when once the nuptial benediction has been pronounced, the obligation of propriety ceases. All barriers are thrown down, and young things who a little while before were not allowed to suspect what love was, soon assert the privilege of saying, "I am a married woman, don't mind me. I know what you mean!" The ball-room, the festival, the theatre, are thrown open to them without restraint; and reckless novels assist in explaining what kind of thing life is. They become at once, too, the object of the attacks of systematic seduc-

tion. Disciples of Balzac, (who has demonstrated —anything may be demonstrated—that it is absolutely impossible for any genteel, pretty woman, to pass through life without one or two intrigues,) begin to flutter round a bride as soon as she is introduced into society. The forms of intercourse adopted in the upper classes of all countries are favourable to immorality. In France, men are generally theoretical rakes; and women, as I have shown, are prepared to be victims.

Probably the daughters of the middle classes in France are the best cared for and protected. In the last century it was necessary to guard them from the licentious nobles; and, though the danger has ceased, certain habits of surveillance have been kept up. Among the lower classes, including the work-people, though there is a good deal of care shown in some families, yet, as a rule, care is impossible. Young girls are left, after having passed a certain age, to take charge of themselves, and, naturally, are often victims either to people of their own rank or to the rich. One of the most popular songs of Pierre Dupont, complains that even shopboys exercise what used to be "the lord's right;" for misery places the girls under the subjection of gold. When possible, as soon as the first rudiments of education have been given, they are early apprenticed; and prudent parents marry them at the first opportunity, for they

know that as soon as their daughters have passed sixteen, and begin to work on their own account, there is danger for them.

Among the poorer classes very little instruction is, of course, given to the young girl, who is compelled from a very early age to assist her mother in domestic affairs. Many learn to read and write, as I have said, with the Sisters, and are taught their catechism to prepare for the first communion; after which they enter into service, or are apprenticed to some trade. Already, however, corrupting influences have been at work upon them. Parents and friends do not refrain in the slightest degree, when they are present, from conversing on subjects most improper for young minds to deal with; and the poor things smile and blush at equivocations which would make our English ears tingle. There are many things to be seen in the streets of Paris quite sufficient to destroy all idea of modesty as we understand it.

The books which form the favourite reading of the young work-girls—which the learned among them often read to the unlearned in bed instead of sleeping—are novels that seem to be constructed for the special purpose of assisting those who would seduce them. They do not care for what are generally called "immoral productions," as if all others were moral. The pages which excite their imaginations, and prepare them to listen to delusive promises, are those

which describe luxury, and wealth, and splendour, and happiness which they are never destined to taste. In this way a morbid desire of material enjoyment is developed. "Before I die," I have heard it said, "I should like to enjoy a snatch of merry existence —*un peu de bon temps*—a year, a month, a week, and after that come what may!" Manifestly, a young girl in this mood of mind is ready for any proposal which includes the prospect of a shawl, a new bonnet, a muff, some good dinners, a pretty lodging, and the envy of her sex. I suppose this is a peculiarity of French women—of course it cannot be true amongst us—but half the delight of a handsome gown seems to consist in showing it to "dear friends," who will bite their lips and try to find fault with the ground or the flowers, the texture or the colour; or, if all these are unexceptionable, with their adaptation to the complexion of the owner: "it is very pretty, but it does not suit *you*—it would exactly suit *me*."

Poor girls by their position, and by the vices of their parents, are often in danger, even if they do not yield to the causes here spoken of. There was a young girl, one of whose names was Amélie, living with her parents, drunken people, who compelled her to work for their support. A villanous locksmith set eyes upon her, and having ingratiated himself with the father and mother by treating them to drink, paid his addresses, was successful, and aban-

doned her at the moment when she was most in need of his assistance. As long as he was a friend of the family, and supplied plenty of wine, the parents shut their eyes to what was going on; but when he disappeared they began beating her every day, until, exasperated, she escaped from the house and took refuge with Madame Rose ——, from whom, at various times, I heard of these proceedings. She was kindly received and lodged; but at length the mother found her out, and, going to the Commissary of Police, procured a person to be sent to support her maternal authority, and compel Rose to give up the girl and her things. Amélie was not taken home, but before the Commissary, who gave her a long lecture upon duty. She complained that, at her age, she was beaten like a child; but was told that she must bear with all until she was twenty-one. As she was not sufficiently submissive—the law is very exacting in the matter of filial obedience—they sent her, under guard of a gendarme, to the Prefecture of Police. Having passed a day in the dépôt there, she was put into a van with a number of abandoned women, and conveyed to the prison of St. Lazare. Here, after a week's confinement, she became ill, and wished to write to her friend, Madame Rose, to come and see her; but the preliminary payment of ten sous was required, and so no one would take her letter. However, at length the mother came with

her release; she was once more taken to the Prefecture, and then sent home on foot in her deplorable state. A little while afterwards she went into the hospital of the Bourbe to lie in, when she again wanted to write to Madame Rose; but here a preliminary payment of fifteen sous was required. Having remained seven days she was turned out with her infant, and sent home, still to work at shirt-making for the support of her drunken parents. She is very clever and industrious. Her mother pays fourteen francs a-month for the nursing of the child, which lives in spite of everything, and takes the remainder of her earnings for herself. Of course she waits with impatience for her majority, when there is no doubt she will rise in insurrection.

By the way, medical writers assure us that certain occupations exercise disastrous influence upon female morality, and cite as examples milliners and sempstresses. Montaigne had already made the same remark, but I believe that it is greatly exaggerated. If sedentary workwomen are less pure in manners than others, it is probable that we may find the cause in the smallness of their gains rather than in absurd meditations, in which material agencies, not perhaps without some slight influence, are made to answer entirely for actions to which every form of moral doctrine attaches the idea of responsibility. Dressmakers, also, go mad in a greater proportion

than other workwomen—a fact I should be disposed to explain rather by mental anxiety than attitude. Of late years there has been a tendency among persons calling themselves scientific, to explain most mental phenomena, especially mental diseases, by the action of external physical causes. The progress of modern knowledge consists, often, in checking inquiry, by giving seriously as an explanation of a puzzling fact a diluted statement of that fact. We are told that certain forms of imprisonment, for example, produce madness; but why not on all subjects? Because all are not "predisposed!" This can scarcely satisfy an inquirer. We want another Bacon—not to show us new fields and pastures of knowledge, but to point out where we have really discovered, and where we have made haste to seem to know, filling up the intervals in the yet half-levied army of knowledge by men of straw, connecting fortresses of granite by bastions of pasteboard, painting and varnishing over all defects, and smiling to see the vanguard of scepticism halt in dismay at sight of what seem to be impregnable fortifications. It is true that the public is more to blame than the men of science. They will admire only those who are "point-devise." Admiration is not a necessary of life, but how many can resist the pleasure, when offered on easy terms, of giving laws of thought to a generation, of appearing as the inter-

preters of nature, and of scolding the age for not being as wordy-wise as themselves!

A fact worthy of remark is the disproportion that exists between the number of indigent women and indigent men. There are almost twice as many poor women, in France and in other countries, as poor men—that is, forty-six to every twenty-seven. The wants of women are fewer, and their habits are more sober; but it is far more difficult for them to gain their living. They are less certain of finding work, and much worse paid. This is the reason that, in default of a husband, many take lovers, which custom prevents the disproportion from increasing. There are only twenty poor young girls to nineteen poor young men. Unfortunately, the unions that are formed are often not prolonged beyond the period of youth. The woman is deserted, and, by degrees, falls into misery, after having for a time swelled the ranks of mercenary vice. It is a curious fact that, although girls arrive at maturity much earlier than boys, the latter begin to infringe the law sooner. Setting aside exceptions, women become criminal at a later period of life than men, the obscure observation of which fact may have led to the popular absurdity that all old women are wicked. Men sacrifice morality to ambition. Women transgress its rules when they despair of a comfortable establishment in life. The unfortunate female popu-

lation of Paris is constantly swelled by young girls deluded by students, commercial travellers, and soldiers, in the country, and taken up to the capital to be abandoned. I here approach forbidden ground; statistical and philosophical writers have trodden it before: but it is necessary to say that some of the most monstrous characters in French romance—virtuous courtesans, pursuing their avocations with high-minded and affectionate motives—have been discovered, and described, and named, and classified by the police, which assures us that in Paris they number thirty-one. The writers, therefore, who choose these heroines, have not even the merit of originality. They deliberately pick out the nightmares of civilisation, and of the exception make a rule—that is all.

CHAPTER VII.

Influence of Institutions—Primogeniture and the Position of Women—Allies of Conservatism—Theory of the Married State—Marriage a Convenience—English Sentimentality—Youth in France—The Ideal—Property and Parental Authority—Elopements—A Matrimonial Negociation—Young Ladies not to be pitied—Object in Life—How Maidens are Persuaded—Effect of Ennui—Preparation for Marriage—The Signing of the Contract—Imitation of the Upper Classes—Expeditious Courtship—Buying a Husband—A Cherry-tree—An avaricious Barber—Saving a Dowry—Making Acquaintance with a Wife—Rômance in Marriage—The Family in danger—Odious Theorists—The Bourgeois, how worked upon—Objects of the Democratic Party—Theories of Property—Spoliation—Hostility to Marriage—True Topics of Criticism—Divorce, its effects—Corruption of the Upper and Observation of the Lower Classes.

Every institution plays two parts in this world:—in the first place, it has its direct influence upon manners and public and private actions; and secondly, by the conditions under which it exists, it is a permanent example, an ever-flowing source of instruction to the world. This is why the reform of an institution in general produces results that have not been calculated. Every change indicates the

presence of an idea, and becomes, as it were, its symbol. The results, for example, of the abolition of the law of primogeniture, will not be only the gradual division of the land, and consequent destruction of a useless class, but will tend immediately to elevate and purify our conception of that monad of society called the family. By substituting a vast conservative class of peasant-proprietors for an aristocracy, which seems to have outlived its utility, it will destroy almost the last trace that remains in England of formal feudalism; and lead necessarily to a re-examination of the laws of property, especially as regards the interests of women. This is the reason why the few female thinkers, who have ventured to hope for an amelioration of the condition of their sex, are beginning to direct their notice to the positive laws that maintain our present artificial form of society, and to perceive that they must be relaxed before any moral preachings can have effect. If, indeed, women wish to occupy their proper places, the must assist in making room.

From this it will appear that I should be disposed to put the public on its guard against those useful allies of what is commonly called Conservatism, who try to appease our anxiety for good by telling us that we don't deserve it; and who say that the best way to get all we want is to reform ourselves. Personal improvement, however, is not a chameleon

change of colour: it is an advance, both in size and position. It requires space and opportunity. Individuals may develope to take the place of those who decay; the Saxons produced politicians when the Norman intellect waned: but classes ameliorate only to adapt themselves to better circumstances within their reach. Who goes through the platoon exercise as an amateur? How many will fit themselves to give a vote whose franchise depends on the courage of a minister and the convenience of a party?

The theory commonly held in France of the rights and duties of the married state, is exactly appropriated to circumstances. To effect any serious change, it would be necessary to alter the character of the institution of marriage—or, at any rate, to modify the positive and social laws that regulate it. My business is not to criticise projects of reform; but it is impossible to speak of marriage in France without allusion, not only to the influence exerted on forms of thought by the conditions under which it is made to exist, but also to the direction it has given to speculation, and the theories that have been invented to remove or palliate its miseries.

According to French society at large—setting aside all sentimentalists, and those moments in which all are more or less sentimental—marriage is simply a convenient state established by law and

custom, because conducive to the continuance of the species. By most persons it is regarded as a mere matter of business—an incident that happens of course at a certain period of life, but which is rather the concern of the parents than of the parties themselves. Young men will correct me if I am wrong; but in England I think that the majority, about or before the age of twenty, begin to make themselves, in imagination, the hero of some romantic adventure, which is to terminate, like "Quentin Durward," or any other novel, in "a happy marriage." How far the influence of fiction may be traced in this state of mind it would be difficult to say, but certainly the youth of England never contemplate, as the most brilliant period of existence, a kind of interregnum between school-days and "settling for life," in which sentimental attachments may be formed and broken, mistresses taken and cast off, misery or sorrow experienced, and poetical illusions indulged. We frame to ourselves and preserve as a companion, which we treat with more or less respect as we get older and harder, and more disappointed, an Ideal Being, a kind of heroine, from materials furnished by our reading and our desires; but we always hope to find it sitting in its papa's house, before a piano or behind a tea-table, to fall in love with it, to woo it, and finally to publish the banns of our marriage with it. The French-

man evokes a similar phantasy, and goes on seeking for its representative through life—sometimes among grisettes, sometimes among peasant-girls, when his tastes are low and not very corrupt, but, generally speaking, in society, among the wives of his friends —anywhere but in the demure person to whom the law is to unite him, and who is to be, probably, the mother of his children.

The regulations to which property in France is subject no doubt produce many beneficial effects, and will produce more when the national character has received certain modifications. They have tended, however, to exaggerate the natural authority of parents over their children in cases where there is, properly speaking, no place for authority. In principle the law does not admit that a child can ever marry without the consent of the parents, although, after the age of twenty-five, a son is allowed to make what are called respectful summonses to his father, which enable him to dispense with formal approval. The existence of these formalities is the reason why what are called in England "elopements" scarcely ever take place in France—at least, when marriage is the object. There never has been any Gretna Green there. No union can be hurried over by parties yet panting from a post-chaise, the horses still steaming, and the pursuers coming down the hill in the distance. However, young men some-

times do run away with pretty or wealthy young girls, and manage to compromise them so far that marriage is generally considered necessary. Such adventures would, perhaps, happen oftener, if the young men could be trusted, and if there were any reasonable certainty that the parents would afterwards consent. But it often comes to pass that obstinacy on one side or the other reduces the poor girl who has taken this desperate step, for fear of being sold, to become the mistress of her lover, who one day or other is sure to shake off the yoke, and leave her to find another friend.

To give an idea of the way in which a French marriage is brought about in the ordinary course of things, I may mention that, not long ago, I called on a friend whose eldest daughter was a pretty girl of sixteen. Two ladies were present, to whom M. A—— was speaking with the respect due to strangers. A few phrases let me into the secret of their conference. They were charged by the parents of a deaf and dumb man to seek a young girl as a wife for him. They had heard of Mademoiselle A——, and came to make proposals. Their offer was declined, and I was requested never to allude to the circumstance before the young lady herself. If, however, the contrary had been the case, no one would have been shocked or surprised; for this is about the way in which two-thirds of the marriages

that take place in France are patched up. Generally speaking, the union is not of souls, but of properties.

I must not, however, against my will, excite unreasonable pity and sympathy for the young creatures who are thus disposed of. There has been too much of morbid writing on that subject. Through the whole of romantic literature, indeed, there runs a complaint that parents will persist in throwing obstacles in the way of marriages of affection, and especially in uniting unwilling daughters to rich old men instead of to handsome gallant youths. Such things are not so common in real life as ladies try to persuade us. There is nothing so rare as love in this world; and most of the fair dames who pretend that their marriage-ring is only one link of a heavy chain imposed against their will, might have indulged in the luxury of a union of affection if they had desired. Young ladies, it is true, always set out with a little sentimental episode, entered into partly for mere amusement,—partly in obedience to instinct; but just rustle silk and jingle gold near at hand, and see how many will not prepare a fascinating smile as they turn round! When they have satisfied their ambition, when they have revelled in wealth, when they discover that outward show cannot by any means satisfy the heart, they begin to cast back in their minds and seek to find how they,

innocent, sentimental, loving things, were forced into a union of interest. They pity themselves, and expect us to pity them. But there is a vulgar proverb,—"You cannot eat your cake and have your cake." You have eagerly accepted a brilliant match, not caring what affectionate heart you were crushing, what life you were embittering; sometimes you coax back your letters if you have been imprudent, or deny with angelic impertinence looks and hand-pressure if you belong to the prudent modern school; and then, after you have run through the whole circle of pleasure that wealth affords, when your husband begins to appear ridiculous, buys books, or classifies shells, when your wishes become keener and the prospect of deliverance in time grows less,—why, then you lament your unhappy destiny, take to sal volatile, brandy and water, a favourite preacher, —sometimes to intrigue, and always to reading of deplorable novels, in which you can identify yourselves with characters whose innocence and constancy you have not imitated, or whose consolations threaten you with a jury and a verdict.

I have already said that young girls in France are brought up with the idea that their great object in life is to make a good marriage. In order that no sentimental fancies may interfere with the transaction of what is really a piece of business, one idea is constantly presented to their minds,—namely,

that as soon as they have a husband they will obtain their liberty and a position. Until then they are like unsold slaves in the market, and cast furtive glances at all likely customers. If they do happen to object to a match proposed by their parents, alleging repugnance or previous affection, they are easily overcome without any dramatic scenes. An appeal is made to their affection and their reason, strengthened by insinuations of unknown pleasures and honours—rarely without success. It is not necessary to seek in any other cause than this the admitted frequency of the violation of the marriage vow. After a little time, even in the best when the enthusiasm of self-sacrifice has died away, when measure has been taken of purchased delights, when all toys have been trifled with and broken, the wife passes from indifference to aversion, or, instructed by the books which she has acquired a privilege of reading, "feels her life dreary and seeks for a soul companion." A woman has already said, "*L'ennui nous damne.*"

According to Madame Gasparin, young girls, whose education is scarcely finished,—who have just acquired certain elementary notions, — who have partly learned one or two languages, — who have made a little progress in music and painting, are considered to be quite ready to undertake the duties of the marriage state. More positive writers have proposed that the law should forbid the early unions

that now take place; or, at any rate, that public opinion should interfere to bring about a reform, and postpone the period of marriage until a maiden has reached the age of twenty-one or twenty-two. Mothers cry out against this idea, because they think their responsibility quite heavy enough as it is. Three or four years more of intense watchfulness over a charge ever increasing in cunning would be too much. This objection arises from the fact that parents, in contradistinction to the law, believe that young girls are never able to take care of themselves.

However, let us suppose that by the interposition of friends or relations it is agreed that a modest young maiden shall be united to a man more or less young, who is tired of a stormy single life, has discarded, or is ready to discard his mistresses, and, above all, who has got "a position." The first official ceremony is the signing of the contract, which generally takes place after one or two interviews have been allowed between the couple,—of course before witnesses. The disgusting minuteness of the details discussed on the occasion are, according to all female writers, the first blow struck at conjugal happiness. Every possible case is foreseen—widowhood, legal separation, second marriage, birth or death of children—every poetical illusion or hope that might remain is pitilessly dispelled.

Both bridegroom and bride are forced to notice that they are entering into a kind of partnership, with family convenience for its principal object, the possibility of two or three children clearly laid down, the probability of domestic unhappiness distinctly pointed out; and if one or both choose to add to all this a romantic attachment, a real marriage, that is quite another affair, carefully kept out of sight.

I have already noticed the extent to which the lower classes in France imitate the manners of the higher. Since the establishment of one uniform law, regulating the marriage of the poorest workman as of the haughtiest banker, there is a curious monotony in the language and sentiments of the whole country in this particular. Not long ago, a wealthy person went to a banker and said: "I want to marry your daughter: these are the title-deeds of my estates,"—nothing more or less; and the match was struck up at once. Generally speaking, however, it is the young lady that buys a husband. About the same time a peasant was about "to lead to the hymeneal altar" a bride all blushes and muslin, when her father observed: "Now I think of it, I must remind you that the great cherry-tree in the orchard remains mine." "Not so," said the bridegroom; "I can't do without it." "You must." "Well, then, nothing has been done;" and so the marriage was broken off, without any reference at all to the feelings

and wishes of the principal party interested. A still more absurd incident occurred the other day in my neighbourhood. A portress had betrothed her daughter, about fifteen years of age, to a barber, and promised to give her a dowry of four hundred francs —sixteen pounds sterling. The day before the ceremony was to take place the young lady came to the shop, and, half opening the door, peeped in and cried out: "Mother says she has changed her mind about the dowry." The barber, who had the nose of a customer between his thumb and fore-finger, looked over his shoulder, and said, "You are joking." "No; mother wants the money herself." "Then tell her," quoth her affianced, making a gash in his victim's chin, "that I sha'n't marry you." The disappointed bride slammed the door and went away, crying as bitterly as if she had spoilt a new gown. We constantly hear in Paris, in every class, of marriages discussed and broken off from motives of this kind.

As a rule, the principal thing which a marrying man looks to is the amount of linen, furniture, or money his wife is to bring him. She herself is a mere secondary consideration. This is the reason why mothers in poor or middling families pass so many years of their life in scraping and economising —sometimes denying themselves and their husbands even necessary comforts, in order that their daughters

may not be rejected by the fine, generous, high-spirited youth of France, who despise the sons of Albion for their shop-keeping propensities. Every unexpected piece of good luck is at once classified as "a contribution to my daughter's dowry;" and this state of anxiety is so common, that when an offer of pecuniary corruption is made to an official, it is almost always concealed under a disinterested solicitude for his daughter's welfare. How many hesitating men have been overcome by the tears and reproaches of their wives, who represent to them that their daughters are still unprovided for!

The interval that elapses between the signing of the contract and the celebration of the final ceremony—say a week or two—is supposed to be spent by the young people in becoming acquainted one with the other. They are then allowed a little more liberty of intercourse, but rarely see each other except in the presence of at least one witness. They sit at opposite sides of the room, and talk of the weather, or try to exhibit their intellectual acquirements. Any expansion of sentiment is as impossible as it would be ridiculous. The contracting parties have been brought together by convenience—by prudence—by reason—not at all by affection. Neither they nor their friends pretend that. Sometimes, of course, love springs up; but this must be after the marriage: for the tendency of a formal interview, in which

every word is watched and weighed, and which cannot degenerate into familiarity, because, according to public opinion, neither the young man nor the young woman is to be trusted, is inevitably to destroy everything that has the remotest relation to romance. It is a common thing to say that romance is neither respectable nor desirable—a superfluous ingredient in a marriage. I doubt it, because this sentiment, so dangerous and difficult to deal with, seems in women a necessary of life. They must indulge in it once at least, so that, if they are not allowed to do so before marriage, they will after; and how few chances there are that the hero of their story will be their husband! There are none, according to the French.

Without positively maintaining the theory of aptitudes and sympathies, it is very evident that, unless we exclude love and passion altogether from the world, it is quite impossible for families to form and exist under proper conditions in a country where such is the theory and practice of marriage. The middle classes in France have recently raised or repeated the cry that the institution of the family was in danger; and it is quite true that certain odious speculators have put forward theories that lead more or less directly to promiscuity. I should be quite ready to admit that stones and brickbats would be the proper punishments of such monstro-

sities, if contempt were not still more effectual. But under cover of what facts and arguments do these obscene enemies of civilisation advance to the attack of the only refuge for care that man possesses? They describe, without much exaggeration, the present deplorable state of things; they prove that, by law and by the influence of manners, marriage has already in France been entirely divested of its sacred character, and show that there is nothing whatever but the invincible repugnances of the best natures to prevent the family, according to its philosophical conception, from being utterly destroyed. They then argue, with real or affected ignorance of the human character, that an equal number of legitimate unions consecrated by love would take place if all regulations were destroyed, and that the remainder of the world would be relieved from the discomfort and the sin of perpetually infringing laws that they detest. This is like killing a sick man who has one healthy part about him, and supposing that the healthy part would continue in separate existence. Surely such speculations are not very dangerous. The danger lies in the existence of the corruptions that provoke them. These corruptions have been pointed out likewise by shoals of writers, whose objects are more moral, and who desire to reform and not destroy; but nearly all, without exception, have been silenced or wounded by the same terrible cry of "the family

in danger,"—the "family and property." Every one felt the intimate and artificial connexion that existed between those two things.

The fuglemen of the calumny, whom I cannot name, were and are living in open defiance of every law, divine and human, but well knew that the bourgeois, once convinced that his comfortable arrangements were menaced with disturbance, would buckle on his shako and take up his musket, and massacre one day and cringe to despotism the next, without inquiring into the character of those who raised the cry, or the intention of those against whom it was directed. Many a worthy grocer, who tries to persuade himself that he is not his brother's keeper, who is uneasy and angry when the days of June are mentioned, took part in that frightful crime which has ever since stood like a spectre in the path of France, frightening it from progress, simply because he was led away by the idea that the insurgents intended at once to make every woman a priestess of Corinth, and every till a national savings' bank. Strictly speaking, therefore, his only sin was ignorance. The real projects of the Democratic party—not on that particular occasion, when the people gave way to bad passions in answer to a great provocation, but in general—were to retard the period of marriage, to give the wife a share in the administration of the common property and a legal right of

government over her children, to allow divorce, and so on. Some of their proposals were objectionable, and all open to discussion; but they never entertained any desire to destroy the institution of the family. Indeed, if they had said so, we might safely have disbelieved them. They would only have been repeating a lesson they did not understand. The lower orders in France are not the angels their flatterers describe; but they have two or three virtues which are almost prejudices with them, and which must be destroyed before they adopt the impure hallucinations of philosophical rakes.

In France, however, as we have seen, marriage is not a union of persons, but a union of properties; and those who cried out that "family and property" were conjointly in danger, really meant that property was menaced, and through it the institution of the family. Ludicrously stated, this was as much as to say that a man and woman marrying and having children, and living by their earnings, did not constitute a family; and the demagogues did not fail to point out that, according to such a conception, "the family" was a monopoly in the hands of the rich!

This is not the place to expound the conflicting theories of property in France. Many erroneous notions have been propagated on the subject; and, indeed, it is under favour of them that the Consti-

tution was overthrown in 1851. Every one, however, who, from ignorance or other motives, in any country, contributed to spread a conviction that the Republicans entertained any projects of "spoliation," may consider himself an accomplice in the *coup d'état*. There may have been a few thousand fellows, with empty heads and empty pockets, who mistook the import of scientific discussions, and desired a general scramble; but there was really no party at all "hostile to property." The Whigs and the Liberals generally, in England, have been accused of infidelity frequently, with about as much reason as the French Democrats of a design to spoliate. There is certainly a fundamental difference between the Conservatives and Republicans on this point, and the latter are not far wrong. If they had known how to express themselves in reasonable language, and been listened to with a little coolness, the opinion held of them amongst us would be somewhat different from what it is. The Conservatives maintain that the right of property is so sacred that even taxation is, to a certain extent, an infringement of it—that it is above all laws, immutable, a Divine institution. The Republicans reply, that property is a thing acquired by the favour of law, and remains amenable to legislation. In these terms the question seems to belong to the domain of pure Science; but the practical deductions of the conflicting theories are widely different.

One school denies the right of the State to tax property in order to give assistance to the poor, for to do so is "spoliation;" and the other says that property may be taxed even to give work—"huge spoliation!" One would abolish our poor-law; the other would substitute a mutual-assurance system, according to which every man, when out of work or unfortunate, would have a right to support; which, of course, would be the extreme of "spoliation." These are mere hints; but I think they justify me in saying that, in principle, the Republicans are right, though, when they come to details, they exhibit the wonderful want of practicalness which is characteristic of their nation.

This digression will save me from the charge of being what is called a Socialist, if I now admit that the discontent and indignation which marriage, as at present constituted in France, arouses in certain writers, male and female, is to me perfectly comprehensible. Unfortunately, however, those who have expressed their hostility most eloquently, have been satisfied with placing themselves in an antagonistic posture; have chosen, as if on purpose to repel, illustrations of the strangest and most dangerous kind, and nearly always leave it in doubt whether they desire to destroy or to reform. I suspect that in general they are spurred by sufferings, either personal, or, at any rate, very near to them, and do not

look much to consequences. Their function is criticism. They leave it to others to propose new plans and systems. It is too true, however, that the French mind is disposed, by an original defect, rather to destroy what displeases than to modify. If it cannot remain Catholic it becomes Infidel. It wants measure and moderation. We must admit, accordingly, that although no party has ever contemplated the abolition of marriage, there is a school quite distinct from the advocates of promiscuity, which tends, without being exactly conscious of its own objects, to take away the external sanction which law and religion give.

Reasonable men, however, perceive, that though there are many things in the law capable of being altered with advantage, the chief evils attendant on marriage have another origin—in bad education, unenlightened public opinion, and general corruption. Speculation has lingered long on the means of getting the starling out of the cage, but has not troubled itself much about how it was first put in. It has thought of relieving wives already made, rather than of preventing other wives being made under the same conditions. For this reason, I have often thought that all this cry, though addressed to a legitimate feeling, and founded on real grievances, was merely raised to justify intrigue and loose manners; which may be the case in many instances.

Divorce was permitted under the old Republic and under the first Empire. Royalist writers have exaggerated its evil consequences; but it is quite certain that a good many men changed their wives with marvellous rapidity. As in ancient Rome, women began to count years by husbands, and not by consuls. On the other hand we must remember, that under the old régime, though people nominally remained man and wife, fidelity, amongst the courtiers at any rate, the *élite* of the nation, was considered perfectly ridiculous. Remarkable exceptions there may have been; but the rule was a freedom in the intercourse of the sexes which has, perhaps, never at any other time been equalled. This applies, however, almost entirely to the upper classes; for the bourgeoisie, to whom corruption came later, were often staid and sober, although their wives did allow themselves sometimes to be visited by young courtiers. The great misfortune, however, was, that theories and opinions in morals were formed amongst the noblesse and inherited by those who became their political successors.

We have never yet been told how far, and in what way, the observation by the people of the corruption of their governors brings about revolutions. Those who have enlarged on this topic seem to imagine that the lower orders have condemned the upper in the spirit of severe moralists, but I am afraid that

they have condemned and imitated. Every one has heard the murder of the Duchess of Praslin; and a dozen instances of flagrant corruption mentioned, as among the causes of the Revolution of February. They were merely taken as proved examples of the extent to which the governing classes, under the monarchy of July, had enfranchised themselves from the laws of morality. We must not suppose, indeed, that instances of this kind merely stated in the press could produce any wonderful effect. The conduct of every wealthy or even comfortable family is watched, with attention that is sometimes malignant, by five or six poorer neighbours; and if startling public revelations come to confirm private remarks, then it is that the revolution of contempt takes place. We may be assured that all our vices, our false steps, even our desires, are better known to those who are a station below us, than to our equals. My father will, no doubt, develope these causes of revolutions in the little book on a great subject which he is about to publish, entitled, "The Nemesis of Power."

CHAPTER VIII.

Marriage Customs — Humorous Persecution — Dinners at the Barrier — Materials — Jokes and Songs — Dancing — An impatient Locksmith—The Socialists—Making Acquaintance with the Bride—Illusions of Youth—A sham-delicate Idea—Two Aristocracies—After the Honeymoon—Beating Wives—Duc de Praslin—Austerity of the old Bourgeoisie—Female Admirers of the Emperor—Joys of Marriage—Antagonists of the Institution — George Sand — Women and Circumstances — Female Education — Madame L—— "Successes" in Society — M. Toussenel—An affectionate Mother—A dutiful Wife—Accepting Presents—Consequence of Immorality—Right and Expediency—A fortunate Rake—Auguste Guyard and Prejudice —M. Leynardier on Family Life—Laws of Property.

THERE are some things in the way in which a French marriage is concluded very different from ours. Amongst the higher classes, a banquet and a ball are given in the house of the bride's parents; but the young couple, instead of hurrying away to some distant inn after the ceremony, remain and take part in the rejoicings. The nuptial chamber is prepared in the house. A ceremony called "putting the bride to bed" is still practised in some families, but is no longer considered fashionable. Whilst the

dancing is going on, the mother and the mother-in-law of the trembling victim take possession of her and lead her to the bridal chamber, where, in presence of some few privileged young ladies, she is decked out in articles of dress with which I am not familiar, including a cap or *cornette* garnished with lace, which seems to have a symbolical signification. Of old, if all this had not been done with due solemnity, there would have been no blessing on the union. In many provincial districts the whole ceremony is a very noisy and boisterous one. During the dinner, some dexterous and impudent fellow creeps under the table, and, watching his opportunity, snatches off the bride's garter, which he afterwards exhibits to great applause. Then everybody tries to catch hold of the bride and tantalise the bridegroom. Young wags, who envy his courage, revenge themselves by keeping the couple apart as long as they can, and the story of the mean Nicaise has more than once been carried out. Very often, even, after the happy pair have been some time retired, an irruption is made into the room by a crowd of young men and women, one of whom carries a huge bowl of hot wine, well sugared and spiced, the qualities of which are enumerated in a speech. The father of the bride sometimes comes in and disperses this merry mob with a horsewhip.

The workmen, and the classes immediately above them, are often still more noisy on these interesting

occasions. When the ceremony has been performed, first at the Mairie and then at the Church, the whole bridal party gets into cabs and hackney-coaches, whose drivers have their shining hats decorated with white favours, and drives to some restaurant outside the barrier. A large hall has been bespoken beforehand, with perhaps dinner for a hundred, paid for not unfrequently by subscription. The dishes are substantial; soup, boiled beef, veal, salad, cheese, apples, and what are called, for some mysterious reason, *the four beggars*—nuts, figs, almonds, and raisins, mixed together. Of course, there is abundance of common wine, with coffee and a thimbleful of brandy afterwards. In a little time the guests begin to feel merry, and jokes shoot up here and there like the preliminary rockets of a fire-work show. By degrees there is a perfect volley of them, not always of the most modest or elegant description. The delicacy of the bride thus receives strange shocks. Even the young girls present understand what is meant, and giggle amongst themselves. At the dessert some grandame strikes up a ditty, commemorative of the good old time when she was heroine in such a scene, full of double meanings and sly allusions, which seem only the more piquant because uttered by a voice that trembles partly from age, partly from excitement, and partly from regret. Comic songs follow, and sentimental; and at last

the bride herself vouchsafes a tender ditty, the words of which are melted into an unintelligible murmur. At length the table is cleared away, and, whilst the old people continue drinking in corners, the young begin to dance, and keep up the ball until no hour in the morning. As for the couple, they slip away early and go home, unless there is a coalition of mischievous bachelors, who engage the bride for several dozen dances, and mercilessly hand her from one to the other. Amongst the workmen such tricks are not so successful as they might be amongst the middle classes, where there is more false shame. I heard the other day of a stout locksmith, who, irritated by being kept waiting a little too long, knocked down the wag, and seizing his wife in his arms like a child, carried her away, to the immense applause of the company. The Socialists, by the by, declare that "the coarseness with which legitimate unions are carried on revolts the modesty of all decent lovers, and fills with disgust every delicate heart." They recommend secret marriages, to be announced, after a reasonable interval, by the young wife appearing in public with a crown of red roses on her head.

All this is very pleasant to talk about, and the ordinary Frenchman thinks it all the more pleasant to act, because he has, in truth, to make the acquaintance of his bride after she is his. He seems

to feel somewhat as we should if, on turning a corner, a beautiful maiden leaped suddenly into our arms. It *would* be agreeable "rather to feel than see" the beating of her heart; and all without the trouble of telling the story of any crazy knight! Certainly. But in that case I should take the liberty of leaving her at the next turning; unless, which is very improbable, our tastes, wishes, characters were accidentally found to agree. The French seem to fear that any near inspection might dissipate what they call "their illusions"—that is to say, the fantastical notions of women—marriageable women—which they deliberately entertain. It is a singular thing to hear young men gravely hoping that they may long retain these said "illusions," without perceiving that they resemble students who should say, "Let our blunders, which we have found out, since we give them that name, be everlasting!" An Englishman may regret the time when he was deceived into believing in beauty and truth—as well he may, for he has then gone down in the world; but it seems to us simply comic to apply the word "illusion" to a state in which we are and wish to remain. The great defect of the French character is "consciousness." They never forget themselves, and thus seem always acting a part. A person of undoubted integrity, making a public oration, will pause to reflect on his qualities, and, laying his hand

on his breast, call himself "a man of heart and honour!" Their literature has taught them this in part. They actually do describe the state of their own minds in speaking, just like the heroes of Corneille and Racine. When, therefore, they talk of their "illusions," we may suppose that they refer to what others think of them, to the figure they would cut in a narrative, and to what will be their own opinion when they grow old.

A sparkling French writer has confessed that he always tried to regard a genteel young lady as a cloud of gauze with head, hands, and feet appended,—a sham-delicate idea which expresses how this effete nation has desecrated woman in its thoughts. No doubt similar, though perhaps less fantastical, notions prevail among the inexperienced young girls. At any rate, they nearly all afterwards declare that, when a few weeks or months of honeymoon have flown by, they are "disenchanted," and that life begins to assume a dreary aspect.

"There are now only two aristocracies," cries a lady; "the aristocracy of the skin and the aristocracy of the beard!" It seems to be a complaint in France, that after the initiatory period of the union, which has no resemblance to a marriage at all, the husband begins too soon and too suddenly to domineer. Accordingly reformers apply themselves assiduously to search out means of sedition or redress, whilst the

victims generally, instead of removing to Mount Aventine, introduce the Gauls into the Capitol. The real cause of discomfort, however, is, that the husband, not being able to feel affection for his wife, grows weary of satisfying her caprices when the motive for complaisance has diminished, and takes the "short method" of tyranny. Amongst the people the question of precedence is settled by blows, and it would be as difficult to persuade a French peasant as an English navigator that he had not a perfect right to beat his partner. At the other extreme of the social hierarchy a couple soon settle down into indifference, and have often no other relations than those of the salon and the table. Every one knows the strange revelations of aristocratic wedded life that were made at the time of the murder of the Duchess of Praslin; how the Duke drove his wife from his bed, abused her before the servants in language fit for a stable, chased her up-stairs, and smashed her collection of porcelain, before working himself up to the commission of his great crime. These two miserable people, though their relations were sufficiently disgusting, showed by the very violence of their outbreaks that they were not at all content to adopt the vile system of mutual toleration, which those who believe that jealousy, however well-founded, is ridiculous, and who look upon marriage as a mere partnership, have invented.

Under the ancient régime the wives of the bourgeoisie, though sometimes exposed to the attacks of dissolute courtiers, bore the reputation of being generally faithful. In the provinces, a widow who married a third time was sure to be treated to a *charivari*, permitted by the authorities and sanctioned by public opinion. At present, as I have already mentioned, these traces of austerity have disappeared as characteristics of any particular class, although, perhaps, the morality of the country has a little improved. We shall see whether, if the Empire last, it will succeed in checking the purification that had begun. I am afraid it will, to a certain extent; because, now that the first feeling of indignation has subsided, I find many ladies of average respectability beginning to admire his Imperial Majesty, confessedly on account of his "success;" and of course it would be absurd to expect that any woman, who sends her applause in that direction, can have any very elevated ideas of probity or chastity. The support, however, which the Emperor receives from the fair sex is quite adventitious and unsought for, and he is no more to be blamed for making courtesans of them than would any physiologist for writing a book, that, falling into the hands of youth, might suggest improper ideas.

It seems to be admitted by most speculative writers, that marriage, as instituted at least in

France, is productive of more sorrows than joys. Comparatively few unions remain long undisturbed; and, even if there are no outbreaks, no struggles visible to the eyes of the world—if we may believe the testimony of women, there is not the more harmony or peace for that. Some have said that matrimony is a state of double selfishness; and hosts deplore, in eloquent language, its "deceptions." The influence of the works of George Sand was great, because they corresponded with the state of female public opinion. They did not invent, but drew attention to existing grounds of complaint; and excited opposition, chiefly because they seemed to suggest an absurd remedy. All French women have read and wept over "Indiana;" but the misfortune is, that brilliant writing of this kind often comes to the assistance of wayward dispositions, and supplies excuses for acts that would, however, be probably performed at any rate. Indeed, the tendency of most works of this class, and of the school from which they proceed, is to excite a kind of moral insurrection against some of the most important laws of society. The sectaries—who are often disappointed old maids or truant wives—have, as usual, gone beyond their prophets, claiming and exercising perfect independence.

It seems a common opinion in France—and I have heard it repeated in England—that the quali-

ties by which women are chiefly differenced from men are the product of education and habit. A lady writer even grumbles at the truth of the saying, that her sex is more merciful, more gentle, more loving, than ours, and attributes this sentimental superiority to the seclusion in which women are kept. It is true that the tender parts of a character are better developed in solitude, which acts precisely in the same way on priests, poets, and philosophers. On the other hand, it is equally true that our mothers and sisters might become hard and selfish if brought into rough contact with the world, whilst we have no examples of their acquiring many of the noble qualities by which men earn forgiveness for their defects. We must not forget, however, how rare it is for women, in their domestic condition, to develope all the virtues of which they are capable. In France—at any rate, amongst the middle classes, where the influence of social regulations is greatest — we find an exaggerated cultivation of cunning and subtilty. Few diplomatists could understand, or contend with, the Parisian bourgeoise upon her own ground.

One of the commonest causes or excuses for conjugal infidelity in France, among the inferior class of traders for example, is the comparatively complete cultivation of the women. I do not mean exactly that they have more positive knowledge than their husbands, but they are better trained. Besides,

their imaginations are naturally more active, and fuller of ideas of elegant luxury. In England, we sometimes hear of young ladies eloping with their fathers' footmen. No example of this kind ever came to my ears in France. The women there—not the unmarried, for they are usually too well kept—always intrigue with men placed in a superior position to themselves. They are led away more by their fancies than by their senses. Madame L—— is a case in point. She was early married to a workman of very industrious habits, but rough and coarse in manners. I can now count upon my fingers half-a-dozen of her lovers, though for many years she seemed to me a pattern of demureness. One was an artist, another was a medical man, another a sculptor. She was never governed by interest, never received a present that I know of; but she was won by an excursion into the country, an elegant breakfast, or an evening at the theatre. Her husband worked his way up in the world, and became a shopkeeper; but her fondness for dress and her probity ruined him, and she is now living on a sixth storey, whilst he has been reduced to take some humble situation.

In all classes in France one pernicious notion or habit circulates, according to which wives, young and old, when they go into society, are allowed, and even expected, to aim at what are called "successes;" that is, at captivating, by their toilette or their beauty,

the attention and admiration of men. I had scarcely written down this remark, when I remembered how often this is the case in our own demure island, which after all, despite my good will, cannot be chosen as the Utopia with which I may compare the aberrations of the French. This said, let us inquire what is the conception among our neighbours of the rights and duties of wives. "I have seen," cries M. Toussenel, in a paroxysm of admiration, "young mothers, not more than twenty years old, ready adorned for the ball, give up their toilette and *their legitimate hopes of successes,* and take off, with tears in their eyes it is true, their armour of battle, to obey the ferocious caprices of pitiless brats, who have become accustomed not to sleep unless their mother sits beside them holding their hand!" The Vicomte Ségur tells another anecdote well worthy to be placed beside this one. He says that during the Revolution he several times met a young and pretty woman, apparently exhausted with fatigue, in the ante-chamber of the Ministry of the Interior. On asking who she was, he learned that she spent all the night in dancing till five o'clock, but got up, nevertheless, at seven, to perform the pious duty of soliciting the release of her husband, then detained in prison, and that she had continued this kind of life without intermission for a whole month! I have already mentioned the perseverance with which wives, notoriously unfaithful,

attend to the comforts and the interests of their partners.

It is the custom of most French married women to accept presents from their friends, not merely such things as books or bouquets, but articles of furniture, vases, timepieces, dresses, and bonnets. Even very scrupulous ladies are said to boast of the munificence of the offerings made to them, in order to provoke the tardy to do likewise. Among the humbler classes useful presents are rarely refused, unless they be offered too abruptly; and then the observation is, "If it had been on New-year's eve, or on my fête day, or——" and so on. It is the custom at a christening for godfathers to make presents, not only to the child, but to its friends, and especially to the godmother. If she happen to be pretty, these presents often lead a great way. They may vary from gloves to silk dresses. The godmother, also, is expected to make presents, but these are often supplied by her *compère*, as her colleague is called. Mademoiselle Fifine, however, on one occasion, in a moment of ostentation, out of her own savings, gave a cloak, worth forty-five francs, to the child of Madame L——.

It is unnecessary to draw the consequences of these desultory observations on the married state. I have already, in previous chapters—with the best precautions I could take to guard against an exagge-

rated impression—intimated that in France there prevails a general disregard, practical and theoretical, of the sacredness of marriage. In this melancholy truth, even more than in intellectual defects, we may seek for one of the chief explanations of the calamitous vicissitudes of the country's social history. You cannot make freemen or steady citizens of any kind out of men of pleasure. The French are fond of uttering sonorous phrases about Morality. When we come to examine, however, what their notion of it is, we find that they speak not of the code from which our rules of conduct are derived, but of a certain transcendental something which has no relation to the affairs of this life. Most of them would smile with contempt if you mentioned "gallantry" as a sin; but they never reflect that the idea of right is one, and that if you set it aside in order to take another man's wife, it will not come back to save you from taking another man's purse. In its place you will find the idea of expediency, according to which you avoid the prison or the scaffold, and which sanctifies everything that escapes punishment. Most persons in France, even those who were at first the most indignant—all except a select few—most persons in France, and many in England, are beginning to appeal to a sort of statute of limitations against any censure of the *coup d'état*. They look upon the Emperor as a Fortunate Rake, who has broken

several commandments it is true, but who has not been mulcted in damages or lost his position in society. We can never expect the French to become a nation of Puritans, but there will be hope for them only when they purify their ideas of the relations of the two sexes. Gross-minded people, even amongst us, have maintained that government was instituted "for the protection of life and property." Its real duty is to maintain that peace and that prosperity in the midst of which we may carry out the command, which is a blessing, "Love one another."

Lest my views be taxed with prejudice, let us see what is a Frenchman's opinion upon family life. We shall find that in this, as in almost every other case, native criticism is more severe than foreign would dare to be. Scarcely one of my strictures on the French character would be left unsupported if I sought testimonies from their literature. I have just shown a previous page to my friend M. Auguste Guyard, and he has reminded me that in his charming, though sometimes too audacious, volume of paradox and wit, called "Quintessences," he goes much beyond me; for whereas I say that the French indifferently assault prejudices and principles, he maintains that the nation is "so much the slave of prejudice that, when it attacks prejudice, it is because it is prejudiced against it."

M. Leynardier, in his "History of the Family," draws the following picture, which would be correct if he had not forgotten to mention that the natural affections, despite institutions, often burst through and suffuse the canvass with brighter tints. He says, "Family life no longer exists in France, unless we choose to give that name to an accidental aggregation of members, over which chance, rather than affection, presides. They collect together from habit; they shun one another from *ennui;* and they separate from interest when they can do without one another, or when, the death of one of the heads of the family occurring, the children ask for the share of the inheritance that then comes to them of right. This they go and gnaw sulkily in a corner alone, leaving the surviving head with, perhaps, a moderate annuity. If the division only takes place at the death of both father and mother, the sole difference is, that the scandal of an ignoble abandonment or a painful isolation is avoided. In both cases, everything has to be begun again. New families are formed. The old family disappears. The ties of affection are weakened. Sympathetic instincts are annulled. Hereditary traditions are forgotten."

M. Leynardier attributes a good deal too much to the influence of property. Indeed he would seem to argue, that the amiable state he regrets was based on the fact that the property of the family was long

kept in one hand, and that domestic happiness was founded on expectant hypocrisy. Of course bickerings do occur at most *post-mortem* divisions. I was waked up one night by the cries of a man dying of cholera in my house, and shortly afterwards was disturbed by a fight between his brothers for a pair of his pantaloons. But it would be scarcely philosophical to argue that, on this account, the pantaloons and all the rest of his clothes should have been given, by law, to one person. Younger brothers, even if they agree with their elder, do so in spite of the absurd custom which leaves them, almost penniless, to compete, backed by influence in the place of knowledge, for the prizes of the lucrative professions.

CHAPTER IX.

Natural Sentiments—Dutiful Sons—An awkward Maternal Visit —Family Festivities — Presents — Joviality — Sunday Afternoon — Ordinary French Living — Cheapness — French and English Dinners—The Noblesse—Luxury—Glutton's Bazaars —Clothing Marts—Artifices of Tradesmen—The Blouse and the Black Coat—Upper and Lower Classes—Ladies in Families—Afternoon Receptions—Rules—Character of the *Fat*—His Conversation—Green Peas—"The Weather and the Crops" Esbrouffe—A Paradox—Scandalous Stories—Imprisonment—A Visit to Mazas—Habeas Corpus—French Homes.

I MUST not omit to mention that, in some of their manifestations, the paternal and filial sentiments are strong in France. To illustrate this, a story is told of a woman who, sitting by the cradle of an expiring child, heard the priest say, "Be resigned; God himself consented to the loss of his Son." She replied, "Ah! but he was not his mother!" On less sublime occasions we may constantly meet with instances of extreme affection of both father and mother towards their offspring. A pleasant sight may sometimes be witnessed in the streets of Paris—elegant young men walking along, arm-in-arm, with old ladies dressed

in the comical simplicity of the provinces, in thick shoes and odd bonnets—mothers come up to visit their sons, who, instead of being ashamed of them, promenade them about everywhere, and hold up their heads with pride when any companion heaves in sight. Sometimes these good ladies, it is true, appear at odd times and in odd ways. Once upon a time an immense quantity of lace and starch, amalgamated into a sort of winged balloon, was seen coming up my staircase, supported by a little woman some three feet and a half high, bearing a basket as big as herself. She had heard that her son was ill, and had set out to nurse him with a huge amount of provisions, not only delicacies for him, but coarse stuff for herself. She was persuaded that nothing wholesome was to be got in Paris. Her dutiful offspring was not quite so bad as he represented himself to be, and was in fact going down-stairs on an expedition to the country with some Rose Pompon or other, when the shrill voice of Madame Joseph was heard keeping the mother at bay. In an instant I was requested to help "to form a chain," and a variety of articles —the old bonnet in which Rose had come, with the bandbox in which the new one had been brought, a faded shawl, and other things which I was requested not to look at, that had formed the chrysalis out of which the pretty, flurried butterfly, that gave them to me had issued,—the whole kit, I say, was

passed rapidly into my room, whither the said Rose also retired during the ill-timed maternal visit. My neighbour received his mother with the languor necessary in an invalid, and never left her side during the whole week that she remained, sending obdurate messages to the disappointed beauty, and behaving, as he said, wagging his crown, like one who knows his filial duties.

Some of the forms of family life in France are not unpleasing. On the eve of the festival of the patron saint of any member—birthdays are never celebrated—it is the custom to present bouquets or pots of flowers, and to forget this formality is considered a mark of ill-breeding. The fête kept with most splendour is generally that of a grandfather. All his posterity bring him flowers, and wish him "many happy returns of the day;" and the nosegays are collected and heaped up in a tray in the midst of the table at dinner-time. The meal is quite a solemn affair, though often succeeded by songs. A little less formality is exhibited in celebrating the fêtes of fathers and mothers. Husbands and wives make presents to each other on these occasions. The ladies have the best memories, and are the most generous considering their means. Madame L—— presented her lord last year with a watch; Madame Joseph hers with half a dozen shirts; Fifine gave Agricole a pair of boots that did not fit him; but

Madame G——, poor thing, could find nothing better to bestow than a fine boy. Workmen often signalise the fête of a popular employer by a carouse at a cabaret.

There are other occasions on which families find an excuse for merriment, as on New-year's Eve and Pancake Day; but, in general, the interior of a French house is remarkable for complete absence of what we call "joviality." As this arises in part from the excellent custom of only drinking at meals, and then only wine and water, it is good. Nobody sits, as is the case with so many of our middle classes, after meals sipping toddy; or passing a Sunday, church and dinner having been got through, over oranges, nuts, port and sherry—in a half-sleepy state, from which tea is to arouse them for a few hours of consciousness and preparation for a stifling supper. But the French go to an opposite extreme. However gay and life-like they may appear in public, their homes are dreary and dull. No wonder they like to escape from them. Perhaps, indeed, they expend so much of their animal spirits abroad that they have none to spare for their families.

Most French people are economical, and even mean in the way they live at home. We hear great talk of their cookery, their delicate dishes, their fine taste, and so forth; but these are displayed as a

rule only on high days and holidays. A common French dinner consists of a vast amount of soup, of the beef that has been boiled down, and perhaps a dish of vegetables, with bread and a little wine. When a ragoût is added, it contains, perhaps, a little meat, with onions *ad libitum*, and grease ditto. The servants—generally country girls, brought up from distant parts for cheapness' sake—know nothing of cookery; and the lady of the house and the children soon get used to this kind of food, whilst the master—regardless of the school-boy's maxim, "Do not make others eat that which you do not like to eat yourself"—takes every opportunity of dining abroad.

The restaurants are always come-at-able, with their dinners at from twenty-five sous, upwards. I have often heard Frenchmen criticise our economical English eating-houses. They laugh at the solid dishes of Bucklersbury, and starve over the semblance of a delicate meal at the Palais Royal. Their stomachs rise at the idea of satisfying their hunger with one plate of meat; they must have, or seem to have, a variety of dishes: must begin with soup, and end with dessert. The cheapest restaurants pretend to meet this demand; but whatever they give is in such small quantities, that I have often been reminded of the Irish potatoes and point, and sometimes of the Barmecide's feast. A French dinner, in fact, really consists of *bread*, with a mouthful or two of tit-bits

to relish it. When this abstemious way of living arises from poverty, of course it is respectable; and the only point for ridicule is the preservation of the orms of a regular meal whilst the thing itself does not exist: but not only do the struggling classes feed in this mean way, but the aristocracy of the Faubourg St. Germain likewise. If you are invited to dinner in that direction, it is good to take a late lunch; for you will generally have little else set before you besides plates and dishes. The origin of this paltry style of existence was that, under Louis Philippe's reign, the noblesse determined to curtail their expenses in order to starve out the usurping Government — a Machiavellian policy, which, forgetting the story of the fly on the wheel, they maintain succeeded to the extent of their hopes. The habits they acquired during this period were found to be so suitable to their position, that they will most probably always preserve them. The greater number of the nobles are priest-ridden; and what they save by starving themselves, their wives, their families, and their servants, in their magnificent hôtels, probably contributes to advance the cause of Jesuitism.

If we seek for real luxury—I mean of the table—in Paris, we must do so amongst the high bourgeoisie, the lords of finance and the fortunate adventurers of the Imperial Court. For them it is that are kept open what I call the Glutton's Bazaars—the

Magasins de Comestibles—certainly the most curious-looking shops to be seen in Paris. There are symmetrically arranged all kinds of fruits, all kinds of game, all kinds of fish; for fishmongers' shops, properly so called, are prohibited in Paris, as diffusing an unwholesome odour. Gorgeous bunches of grapes that suggest wine-making to be sacrilege, beautiful blooming peaches, indigo-coloured prunes, pomegranites that remind the traveller of the bosoms of Eastern virgins, vast pine-apples, cocoa-nuts, and all kinds of exotic fruits, are tastefully mingled with flowers and mosses. Entire roebucks, boars' heads and hams, hares, rabbits, pheasants and woodcocks, snipes, partridges, thrushes, ducks, ortolans—all kinds of game—are either heaped in picturesque confusion or nicely arranged in baskets; in the centre of which, perhaps, is a large turkey stuffed with quails and truffles, of which all Frenchmen think themselves bound to be passionately fond. Close at hand are enormous pike, carp, trout, and turbot, with here and there little basins of gold-fish. Cray-fish are common, but lobsters not. Large crabs are seldom seen, but there are tortoises, oysters, and snails. In some shops, also, fine cheeses, Strasbourg pies, potted meats, and various kinds of delicate wines and liqueurs are sold. Nature abhors a vacuum, they say; but it is easy to see that this phenomenon exists in the stomachs and the pockets of most of those who linger of evenings.

before the brightly-lighted windows of these establishments.

Among the other remarkable shops of Paris are the ready-made men's clothes marts, where most of the middle classes dress; and the great bazaars of ladies' finery, before the windows of which I advise no young man to allow any grisette to lead him. Many of those places have oddly characteristic names. A shoe-shop in the *Rue du Bac* bears the device "*A la Grace de Dieu.*" Their distinguishing features are elegance of arrangement and comparative cheapness. With the exception of woollen articles, everything seems to be dearer in the clothing department in London than in Paris; and I am inclined to think we have accustomed ourselves to pay arbitrary prices. Our manner of counting by pounds instead of by francs is perhaps an impediment to economy. In the cheap Paris shops a number of well-known artifices continue to be used to catch customers. Prices, for example, are given thus:—1 franc 95 centimes—two francs would frighten. Some articles are marked 99 francs 95 centimes, instead of 100 francs. In the same spirit, fruit-girls will call out in their old women's voices, "Peaches for two sous." If you wish to buy you are asked three sous, and easily get an explanation—that the cry was simply to excite people by the hope of cheapness.

I may mention that the use of cloth clothes is still much more general in England than in France. Indeed, except in Paris, the national costume may be said to be the blouse. A black coat is the sign of an aristocrat: and in time of insurrection becomes the mark at which the peasantry fire. A good many of the outrages committed after the *coup d'état*, and attributed to the Republicans, must in reality be laid at the doors of the Bonapartists, who, having been long worked upon by the Socialist emissaries of the present Emperor, thought they would be carrying out his wishes by attacking everything that was respectable. Indeed, even at present, the Legitimists and Orleanists are kept quiet in country places by a threat, which they may have invented themselves, that if they stir the Government will give the signal of "a war against the châteaux."

If the upper classes in France believe anything at all, it is that the lower classes are portentously envious and wicked. Yes; they may be said to be persuaded of that fact. It is common to hear repeated the saying, that, to keep a country in order, you require only a good *parquet* and plenty of gendarmes. Among the same gentlemen it is also customary to boast that, in France, "the law is an atheist." Fathers, when handing over their children to private preceptors, think it very fine to observe: "Never say a word to my son about religion."

Then they are astonished and angry at the immorality of the poor. Some French popular writer, seeing a murderer led to the scaffold, remarked, "There is a man who has mistaken the road to happiness!" Fine teacher of the people!

One or two more observations on character and manners naturally present themselves here. I shall anon have occasion to mention how much of the government of the family is thrown in France upon the women. There seems to be an idea prevalent amongst us that a French lady is a sort of butterfly, fluttering about the house or away from the house, but always appearing in the character of an ornament. This is far from being the real state of the case. So few families in France may be called wealthy, that most of the bright things we sometimes see in public are compelled very practically to look after their own affairs at home. There are, of course, exceptions among the upper bourgeoisie, and in the Faubourg St. Germain, sufficient to form a class; but what we should call mere fashionables are quite rare in Paris—the city of elegance and intrigue. Half the ladies who attend the Imperial balls have been in the kitchen that very day scolding their *bonnes*, and lifting up the lids of their casseroles.

A really elegant dame spends the morning at her toilette, and is ready to be admired at four o'clock in the afternoon. Admirers are not long in coming.

In many houses, from four to five, gentlemen call in, and are received in the salon by the lady alone. No visitor of her own sex is expected, and her husband is away making calls on his own account. If he were to remain and be present at his wife's reception, he would be considered simply ridiculous; and this is a thing which he most especially avoids. Many Frenchmen would rather be what they often are, than run the risk of being supposed to be guarding against such an accident. These afternoon meetings, however, are very pleasant; and when the lady of the house is clever and lively, are, perhaps, superior in enjoyment to the *soirées*. A woman is never seen to so much advantage as when no rivals are present. She is then conscious of exercising undivided sway; none of her powers are wasted in spiteful watching for defects in others, and there is no maliciousness in her amiability.

If there be a drawback to the delight of these meetings, it is in the frequent presence of the thing called a *Fat* in French—answering somewhat to our dandy. He may be distinguished (if the observations of a philosopher may be depended on) by his decisive and yet disconnected conversation, the lightness of his judgments, the temerity of his censures, the indiscretion of his narratives, the bad taste of his jokes, the false brilliance of his witticisms, the affectation of his manners, the impudence of his mien,

the familiarity of his address, the conceit of his attitude, and the self-satisfied air of constraint diffused over his whole person. We see at once that his mind, like his feet, is in tight boots. Some of these bright youths imitate the voice of women; others affect lisping; others avoid, like Orientals, names of ill-augury—as death, bankruptcy, duelling, and so forth. At the same time they are fond of using, on the slightest occasion, such words as despair, horror, frightful, monstrous, tremendous, magnificent. The highest point to which this lamentable absurdity has ever risen was, perhaps, in the case of the Count Dassarre, who, being very beautiful, fancied himself to be Cupid, and went so mad that he ran about, with a bow and quiver for his only costume. I have often heard the most amazing observations proceed from gentlemen of this kind, and be received as evidence of profound wisdom. A ludicrous instance is that of a *fat*, who predicted that, from atmospherical causes, not a single green pea would be eaten in Paris in the course of the season. The words were scarcely out of his mouth, when a man cried "green peas" under the window. Nobody noticed the contradiction, and I understood that observations of this kind were not meant to be tested. Talking of the atmosphere and the weather, I may mention that the French are fond of insisting, from report, on the cold and comfortless climate of England. There is

no people, however, that oftener complains of heat. During a tolerable summer, the whole population seems to be in a state of fever, and employs itself in little else than in drinking Seltzer-water. The violent *émeute* of June was attributed to the heat of the weather. There are political dog-days in France, in which, as small statesmen will have it, the people require to be muzzled. On the slightest rise in the thermometer, grave men, young and old, begin to talk dismally. They fancy that the whole surface of the country will be burned up, and predict unimaginable disasters.

It is at the afternoon meetings I have mentioned that political and private scandal circulates. The Duc d'H——, on the day of the Emperor's marriage, reached a place in his carriage where he was compelled to alight and continue his journey on foot. He could not forbear exclaiming, "What an *esbrouffe* they make about their Emperor!" He was arrested, and kept in prison several days. The matter had no other consequence, except that, for some weeks in the salons, very learned etymological discussions were carried on as to the meaning of the word *esbrouffe*. We youths, who have heard the French language spouting fresh and free from the lips of gay grisettes, were quite familiar with the word. "What an *esbrouffe* you make about nothing!" said Cælina to her lover, when he found her

walking arm-in-arm with a flaxen-haired Englishman in the shady paths of the forest of St. Germain. This *esbrouffe* ended in a rupture. The word means simply "bother." Where the Duke got it, I don't know.

Somebody was repeating Fialin's observation, that it would have been better for the Emperor to have married some poor French girl than a Spanish grandessa. A devout Bonapartist replied, "Sir, you are maintaining a paradox." A police agent was at hand, and instantly arrested him. It is no more lawful to insinuate that his Majesty is a 'paradox,' than to call him by any other of those absurd nicknames which have been invented for popular use.

The scandalous stories circulated about the Court, by Frenchmen who expected to have the privileges of liberty in a state of slavery, caused many persons to be sent to prison. The place of confinement chosen was Mazas. Some of my friends who went to see them described with grim humour the scene. They were admitted into what is called the Gallery of Monkeys. The prisoners are kept *au secret*, as it is called. They are allowed to receive visits only on one day of the week. The stranger is admitted into a little cupboard, about a foot deep. Here he sits on a narrow board, which is let down from the door close behind him. A double grating, some feet apart, allows him dimly to see the prisoner. An inter-

view, under such circumstances, is scarcely agreeable to either party. People feel that some hidden person is listening, and can only communicate by allusion and innuendo. The prisoners say that the seclusion in which they are kept—of course, before condemnation—for France is a country in which, after sixty years of revolution, no Habeas Corpus Act has been thought of; where a man, even before all law was abolished, practically could be kept three, six months, or even a year, in prison, under threat of a trial, and under the solitary system, as if he had been found guilty,—the prisoners, I say, relate, that to be transferred thus from the bustle of society to a silent cell is a most poignant torture. Some of them confess they would almost prefer the lot of those political victims, who, in order to degrade them, the Government purposely puts with the common thieves. The inconvenience of this is, however, that they may be met in the street at a future time by some shabby-looking individual, who reminds them that he has had the honour to pass so many days or weeks in their company at Mazas.

However, there are thousands of topics which might be touched on in a description of Parisian life that I must necessarily omit. The multitude of them that presses on my memory now, necessarily renders this chapter rather desultory. What I desire especially to show is that, with the exceptions that

must naturally occur, from moral causes the French have not created that beautiful thing called Home. It is common, I believe, to remark on this fact in a way which implies their inability to invent what may be called the machinery of comfort; but, in truth, this inability does not exist. When a French family is really bound together by affection, nothing can surpass the pleasure that may be felt around its hearth. As a rule, however, a house is nothing but a rendezvous, where husband, wife, and children meet at stated times, and treat one another with civil indifference.

CHAPTER X.

The Bourgeois—His Settling in Life—Paradise of Women—Female Government—Flower Presents—A French Kitchen—The Pot-au-feu—A Receipt—Soupe aux Choux—Kitchen Furniture—Analysis of a Quartier—Clothes'-shops—Tradesmen's Trickery—Fine Names and Semblances—Suspicious Matters—Second-hand Eating-houses—Commissioners of Analysis—Merchants of the Four Seasons—Fried Potatoes—Bad Furniture—Instances—Economy of a French Family—The *Bonne*—Treatment of Servants—Aristocrats and Artistes—Paris Hospitals—Household Work—Washing—Wood and Coal-dealers—Shopping—Mariette and Mr. Yellow—Selling Hair—A Young Heart—Conjugal Fidelity—Dress of the Bourgeois—Theatres—Free Admissions—Theatrical Critics—The Claque—The Queue—Moralising Influence of the Theatre—Stolen Jokes—The Moral Bourgeois—Contrast between his Taste and that of the Working Classes.

THERE is no name more commonly used, when France is spoken of, than that of Bourgeois. I have already explained, that the upper bourgeoisie of Paris form a class pretty nearly corresponding to what we should emphatically designate as City men — merchants, stockbrokers, bankers, large manufacturers, &c.; whilst the real bourgeoisie is the whole body of persons that cannot be called artizans or labourers

—the middle classes, in fact. Generally speaking, literary men, artists, and other professionals, are excluded and ranked apart; in which case there remains a vast mass of individuals, five-sixths of whom are, perhaps, both intellectually and morally, the most dreary set on the face of the earth.

Taken as a character, a type, the Parisian bourgeois is an amusing object of study. He rarely reaches his perfection until after forty years of age, when, in the position of the master of an establishment and the head of a family, he can raise his head proudly and show that he is conscious of being one of the first citizens of the first country in the world. He is essentially a marrying man, because he wants assistance at his desk or counter. I have already related how he chooses his wife, and hinted under what conditions he passes the early portion of his existence. At a tolerably mature age, having worked off the little sentiment that Nature has given him, and forgotten the instruction acquired at college in his youth, he fixes his eyes upon some maiden fresh from convent or boarding-school—at whose elbow, perhaps, a romantic cousin or dashing young soldier may be sighing—and easily prevails. He makes up his mind beforehand to have two, or, at most, three children; it being considered very unthrifty in France to have more. None but Englishmen, they say, are guilty of the absurdity of six or seven.

Paris has been said to be the hell of horses, the purgatory of husbands, and the paradise of women. In truth, female government is pushed to a great extent in a bourgeois family. Men have gravely asked me if the position of women in England does not border on slavery; because they have heard that, whilst the wife is not supreme, she at the same time stays a great deal at home. In France, the empire is established in the honeymoon by a young wife over a somewhat faded husband; but the cause of its continuance is the natural indolence of the male sex. Sterne's description of the glove-lady is still in some sort correct. Men in business scarcely ever venture on any great operation without consulting their wives or their mistresses; and, as I have said, in humble life the women almost always keep the books. A husband has generally nothing to do with the details of household affairs; he never buys linen, plate, or furniture, much less provisions. The man would be eternally ridiculous who should think of bringing home "a bit of fish" for dinner. He is supposed not to know the price of any article of first necessity. In genteel society, he scarcely ever is aware who his wife has invited to dinner until he sees his guests. The lady of the house overlooks everything—even the dress of her husband; she buys his shirts, his cravats, his gloves: her taste presides over all; and so much the better. I think,

if we were to allow our ladies to dress us as they please, we should soon cease to be so ridiculously unlike every other nation in appearance that every other nation appears ridiculous to us. We might, also, learn some other pleasant things. For example, the habit which couples, young and old,—those who are indifferent obey custom,—have of bringing occasionally, one to the other, a bouquet of flowers, merely as a polite attention, to testify that the stay-at-home has been thought of by the absent. In England, I observe that a lady displays to her husband a pretty lace shawl she has bought for herself; and *he* draws her attention to the capital box of cigars he has bought for himself.

I have already said something about the construction of French houses—principally referring, however, to bachelors' establishments. Families, except in a very few instances, live also in apartments, occupying a whole floor, or only a part, with a small kitchen attached. This last circumstance must seem the oddest of all to the untravelled. But a French kitchen is as unlike an English as any two things bearing the same name can be one to another. All cooking is done by means of charcoal lighted in round or square holes, with a grating at bottom, let into what may be called a broad shelf of brickwork, generally occupying a recess. Above, the chimney spreads wide to catch the smoke. On one of the

holes is placed the earthenware *marmite*—the invariable *pot-au-feu*, which appears to be inimitable in England. It is a soup made of beef, with sometimes a calf's foot; the objection to which is, that it makes the liquor too white: sometimes pieces of fowl, or other poultry. The meat is put in cold water at about ten in the morning, if there be three or four pounds, and the soup is not ready before five in the evening. It must simmer all the time. At about two or three, the vegetables—carrots, turnips, a bunch of leeks, and a small bit of garlic, with fragrant herbs and a burnt onion—are put in. The whole, of course, is carefully skimmed. When ready, a loaf, with a brittle crust, called a *flute*, from its elongated shape, is cut up in the tureen; the broth is poured on, allowed to soak a moment, and then served up. The beef, despite M. Brillat Savarin's complaints that the osmazome is gone, must still be nourishing; and is not at all disagreeable to eat with pickled gherkins. This is almost the only good family dish the French know; except, perhaps, *soupe aux choux*, made with bacon or ham, and sausages, with cabbages, potatoes, and other vegetables. I should observe, that soup in small families is made about twice a-week, there being always enough liquor left to serve for a day or two more. In cool weather the bouillon keeps well. It is generally taken down

into the *cave*, or cellar, one section of which is set aside for the use of each lodger.

If we except the place taken up by the cooking-stove, as the whole apparatus is called, there is merely required in the kitchen, room for a fountain, or filter, with two cocks, replenished every day with water at two sous a-pail, for a small table, and perhaps a chair. The cook occupies the rest of the space; and there is no danger of her hiding followers away. Around are ranged the casseroles and other necessary utensils, either hanging on hooks against the wall, or on shelves. The cook, who, in all small families, is housemaid and lady's-maid as well, generally makes her purchases, when economical, at the nearest market; when not, at the shops of the neighbouring tradesmen—in her own quarter, as the expression is. A quarter, in this sense, is some dozen houses, with great courtyards perhaps, accommodating occasionally as many as thirty families. The street-fronts are supplied with shops. In my "quarter" there was, first, a cabaret; then a hairdresser; then a washerwoman; then a charcutier, or dealer in pigmeat under every variety of shape, and other articles of food besides; then a tailor; then a pastrycook; then a grocer; then a milliner; then a crémerie. Opposite were a staysmaker; a tobacconist; a hardware merchant; an apothecary; a Compagnie Hollandaise, or in-

ferior eating-house; a magasin de comestibles on a small scale; a green-grocery; a watchmaker; a shoemaker; and a café restaurant. In the houses above and behind those shops I have calculated that at the very least four hundred people dwelt, retired bourgeois, professional men, students, nondescripts, and workmen, nearly all with their wives, mistresses, or families and servants. They formed almost a world within themselves, and it was scarcely necessary for them to leave that section of a street to supply their necessities. Bakers and butchers, however, were at a little distance, these trades being subject to a kind of monopoly.

I have already mentioned that almost all articles of dress are bought at vast marts, well known by name to the consumer. Their number is comparatively few. They are worth visiting. A crowd of shop-boys and shop-girls meets you with bows and smiles at the entrance; and you are generally compelled to ascend a certain number of flights of stairs, and to pass through a variety of showrooms, before you reach the place containing the article you want. These shops are proverbial for low trickery; and though there is much talk of tradesmen's dishonesty in England, I think there is even less dependence to be placed on the probity of the small bourgeois of Paris. As to the upper bourgeoisie, in France as in most other countries, trade is so

mixed up with gambling, that it is not surprising to find the moral sense extremely blunted among them. A Levantine shopkeeper once told me, that "it was lawful for a seller to take the tarboosh off the head of his customer if he could do it without being observed." I am afraid that this was but a frank exposition of the art of money-making all over the world.

In Paris, people seem to insist on being deceived by fine names and semblances. Pots for conserves are portentously thick; so are all coffee-cups; and no one ever thinks of complaining. Provided an article be cheap, moreover, no matter how nasty it is. Lemonade is manufactured of sulphuric acid; wine, of anything but the juice of the grape; vinegar, of pyroligneous acid: there is a manufactory of *sauce piquante* at Belleville, of which strange things are whispered. Nobody knows of what chocolate is composed; and everybody knows too well that the *croutons* sold to put in soup are the leavings of the restaurant's table. I may as well mention, that in Paris there are not only second-hand book-shops, but *second-hand eating-houses*, where the fragments left at more expensive places, collected and tastily arranged, are sold to economical amateurs.

There is a Commission instituted in Paris, however, for analysing all suspicious articles of food, &c. It is composed half of members of the Institute, half

of persons named by the city. Its reports are printed but not published. The proceedings are carried on at very little expense. An extraordinary variety of substances is sent to it for analysis; as, composition candles supposed to contain arsenic, painted sweetmeats, coffee accused of being mixed with beans. The most remarkable thing is, that the public, whom it concerns, should know of its existence. No advertisement or notice of it, that I am aware, has ever appeared. The fact passes from mouth to mouth among people suspicious of poison. There is no machinery connected with it. Might we not take a hint from this in England? I believe that already a somewhat similar commission exists, charged with the duty of inspecting all articles sold in druggists' shops.

It used to be calculated that there were thirty thousand people in Paris who gained their living by selling in the streets, and were called "Merchants of the Four Seasons." The number must greatly have diminished now, Louis Napoleon having made war upon the costermongers to please the shopkeepers. Just before the *coup d'état*, indeed, they were so severely treated that many were driven into the country, or compelled to take shops. Lately the severity has slightly relaxed. One of the most flourishing of the minor trades of Paris is that in fried potatoes, invented some twenty-five years ago by a man who made his fortune. How many a poor student, having

found a sou in the corner of an old waistcoat, has gone forth and purchased a meal, sufficient not only to keep off starvation, but to enable him to face next day with a tolerably cheerful countenance! Unless tricks are played with the grease, this food is at any rate pure.

It is not, however, in food alone that the public are in danger of deception, or, rather, of being led away by their love of magniloquence, fighting with their economical propensities. Brilliantly-coloured silks are sold to you at an astonishingly low figure, but they are as thin as onion peel; cotton is mixed with everything that is warranted pure wool or linen. In sofas, straw, hay, and tow are concealed under a thin covering of horse-hair; some of the handsomest articles of furniture exhibited for sale in the fashionable warehouses prove, on examination, to be mahogany veneered over worm-eaten deal. This explains a good deal of the apparent cheapness of French articles. Few are solid or genuine. These remarks have been made before; but I would not repeat them if I had not; in most cases, been convinced of their truth by personal experience. When I bought the *commode* of which I have already spoken, I was not aware that the corner of the *marble*-slab was a piece of wood ingeniously glued on; the chairs I procured at the same time were filled with scarce-dried hay, that soon rotted; and when the varnish had been a

little rubbed off it appeared that every leg had been patched. I bought them cheap, it is true—seven francs a-piece; and sold them back for two francs. By an accident I afterwards learned that, having been once more artistically patched, they left the same dealer's shop as "almost new"—the description given to me—for six francs and a-half a-piece. They will no doubt come back to him again in the course of a month or so. There is no knowing what number of times they have returned to port in this way to refit. I believe it will be found, that even articles perfectly new are much less solid than they seem. The fronts of bedsteads look immoveable as towers; but the *fond sanglé*, or moveable frame, with cross-bands to support the *sommier* or the mattress, is mostly of bad deal, ill-joined. It is scarcely necessary to add, that, as far as form goes, though great emulation is alive in England, the Parisians still distance us in almost everything. They would make a poker, if they used such weapons, a work of art. In the arrangement of colours, too, they are unrivalled, except in picture-painting, where, singularly enough, most of them, forsaking nature, which they could imitate if they chose, use a fantastic pallet, giving us brick-coloured men and flesh-coloured skies.

To return, however, to the economy of a French family. The *bonne*, or servant, has generally a

hard time of it. In most houses you will find that she has been originally imported from the country, often from Lorraine, on miserably small wages, at a very early age. When she has acquired some experience, she, of course, seeks a better place. Servants in France always complain of being half-starved; but they may sometimes mean that they have not all the nice things they would like. They are treated by half-educated people in a stern, cold, haughty manner. The laws have taken little care of them. A week's notice is sufficient; and, in case of dispute, the master's word is almost always unhesitatingly taken. There are certainly many fine democratic features in French society; but the treatment of servants, and the general tendency of the laws to take part with the strong against the weak, the employer against the employed, must be pointed out as a great blot. From what I have seen, I should say that the kindest persons in manner to their inferiors are the descendants of the old aristocracy; and though this good feature may express a belief in their own immeasurable excellence, which calls for an affectation of semi-angelic gentleness, we must give credit where credit is due. The same amenity, based on a much finer principle—that of charity and disregard of worldly distinctions—may be noticed in the best portion of the professional classes, especially the literary men and the artists.

I question whether, even in America, the just medium between authority and familiarity has been better struck. I have never observed in France the use of that tone, half of condescension, half of banter, a mixture of good will and contempt, with which fashionable young men in England speak to "fellows" of the lower orders who may strike their fancy, and whom they pat on the back as they might a dog or a horse.

Generally speaking, in bourgeois families, when a servant becomes ill she is sent to the hospital, and discharged with a week's rent, to take the place, perhaps, of a poor wretch who cannot obtain admission. The Paris hospitals are very fine, and well managed; but still there is a natural repugnance, even in the poorest, to go to them. The public are allowed to enter only twice a-week to see their friends—on Sundays and Thursdays. Everybody is searched on entering, lest they should introduce improper food, it being a vulgar error that sick people are systematically starved, and that whoever can eat must be in good health. Biscuits and oranges may be taken in: they are sold at the doors. There is one entrance where men are searched, and another for women. In spite of every precaution, however, the women often succeed in smuggling in some rubbish, and afterwards boast that they have saved a patient's life. The Great Hospital of Incurables is

filled by persons whose chief disease seems to be poverty. Mad people find comfortable homes at Bicêtre and Charenton. A great proportion of the floating population of the Salpêtrière consists of unfortunate women; but the statistics of insanity tell us, that in France ambition and love of systems are among the most fertile causes of the disease.

There is a good deal of difference in the household work required of servants in France and in England. In France there is no washing-day. No *bonne* would remain an hour if required to get up anything more than her mistress's trumpery (*chiffons*). Coarse linen is fetched by washerwomen from the country every ten days: fine linen is sent to those elegant shops, round the windows of which young men may be seen constantly hanging; or to girls who live in their own lodgings, and have a small circle of customers, one of whom generally becomes a lover. Bachelors are obliged to pay six sous for their shirts; but the good creatures who fetch them undertake, in return for a little civility, to sew on buttons, and otherwise ply the needle. If they did not, we should all very soon be worse than the Pict, victim of Vortigern. Housewives are a little more exacting, and, consequently, less popular. If a bachelor adds a handsome new-year's gift to his thanks, he is sure to be invited in the spring to the Washerwomen's Ball; for every year,

on the festival of the patron saint of these ladies, mighty rejoicings take place amongst them. They go to church, elect a queen, who chooses a king, and the dancing continues until morning summons them to work. Sometimes the queen pitched upon is young and pretty, but although the ballot of the bean is resorted to, matters are generally so arranged that the lady is selected who can afford to treat her companions to a mighty quantity of wine.

In some houses, where water is laid on, the *bonne* may frequently be met lugging a pail upstairs; but, generally, water is bought either at the wandering water-carrier's, or at the shop of the Auvergnat, who supplies you with wood, coal, and charcoal, and combustible balls, in small parcels, making thereon a wonderful profit. There are no door-steps to scour in France, no deal boards to wash, no carpets to shake. Men do all the corresponding work, as cleaning windows, waxing the floor, &c. On the other hand, few tradesmen, comparatively, send round to their customers to ask if "anything is wanted;" so that almost every morning off goes the *bonne* on a marketing and gossiping expedition, with a basket, "the handle of which she causes to dance," as the phrase is: meaning, I am told, that she makes a profit out of everything she buys. I have known one case, however, in which a mistress having got into her head that butter was sixteen

instead of seventeen sous a-pound, the maid was obliged to comply with her fancy, and charge sixteen instead of fourteen sous for the meat; "which," as she said, "was rather a gain than a loss to her."

Poor Mariette! Whenever she saw me she invariably asked if I knew the English address of a Monsieur *Jaune*—I presume, Jones—who had trifled with her, borrowed two hundred francs of her money, and then disappeared. Ah! Mr. Yellow, know that I am commissioned by the deserted Mariette, if I ever meet you in society, to say before every one that you pretended to be a gentleman, and robbed a poor servant-girl of three years' savings. "We always trust Englishmen," said she, naively; "for when they promise a thing they do it." This unfortunate Mariette had met with more rogues than one. A man once persuaded her, when she was very poor, to sell her hair for five francs a-pound, assuring her that she had a Napoleon's worth on her head. When it was cut off, however, and weighed, there were only fifty sous' worth. "It never came again," quoth she, taking off a thing like a wisp of straw from the top of her head. The trade in female hair was once confined to Normandy, Brittany, and Auvergne; but commercial travellers now push into the south of France. The statistics given of the trade are amazing. It is said that two hundred thousand pounds weight are

bought in the provinces every year at five francs, and resold to Parisian hairdressers at ten francs. But there must be some mistake. Few heads grow more than a pound of hair. Ladies tell me that a good "tail" takes many years to grow; so that half the female population of France ought to be cropped: whereas, even in the poor provinces, the majority of girls have most divine *chignons*.

However, I must not relate all the tribulations of poor Mariette, who has lost an eye and a good many other things in her way through the world, all by the fault of *les hommes;* and yet who is still hoping at length to find some young, handsome, romantic fellow, who will take a fancy to her in spite of her story, which she is determined, like an honest girl that she is, to tell, in all its details, from the loss of her hair to the fatal meeting with Monsieur Jaune. "*Bast!*" says she, snapping her fingers; "I am worth something yet. *Croquemort* (nickname for undertaker) has not called for me; and when a woman has her heart left, what matters the rest?" What matters it, indeed, Mariette, if the world would only think so?

The Bourgeois never inquires into all these matters unless the *bonne* be very young and pretty; in which case they say he is usually as inquisitive as could be wished. How often does he split upon that rock! How often is Madame supplied with an everlasting

topic of recrimination! The Bourgeois, by the way, is very punctilious on the point of conjugal fidelity; he is rarely sufficient of a gentleman to pass over matters slightly; his anger is terrible on discovery. Yet no man is so fond of jokes upon unfortunate husbands. The Theatre of the Palais Royal supplies him with an unfailing succession of new ones; and that theatre is his delight. The Bourgeoise affects, of course, to be shocked, and looks mysteriously over her shoulder into a neighbouring box. I must mention that the really respectable Bourgeois—the "fine flower" of the class, turns up his shirt-collar like an Englishman, and shaves his chin—his whole face, in fact, except a bunch in advance of each ear. In this plight—to which men reduce themselves on the same principle that they crop the hind-quarters of poodles—this respectable character may be seen at the theatre, dozing sometimes, but always waking up to understand and applaud any joke that refers to the state in which every one but himself knows him to be.

The question which has lately attracted so much attention in England—I mean that with reference to free admission to theatres, has not yet been raised in Paris. The press, however, has not been allowed to abuse its privilege in the minor theatres of the Boulevarts, which, in most seasons, are tolerably well filled. Still, no true Parisian pays for a place,

if by any means, direct or indirect, he can establish a connexion with a manager or actor.

The press has naturally a great influence on the success of a piece, and the theatrical critic is often a feuilletonist, who has absolute control over his department of the paper. In this case it is known that he sells his good word for a price. I was once offered a review of a book of mine for so much—the amount to be debated, as if I had been buying a horse. Sometimes the publisher of the paper exacts a subscription of a certain number of copies; but these little perquisites are generally left to the literary man, who also has the disposal of a box, and receives presents at New-year's day. An actress, who inspires a tender sentiment in an editor, considers that she has made her fortune.

The *claque* at a theatre, we English can scarcely understand. It answers, however, to the audacious puffs of new works, which used to be inserted by some fashionable publishers in the morning papers with the word "Advertisement" affixed—useless warning to those who *will* be caught. The *claque* is a system of paid applause. It consists in a number of individuals, led by one hard-handed fellow, who occupy the front seats of the pit and clap at the appointed time. Everybody knows the mercenary nature of this applause. The Turks pay people to dance for them, and we make fun thereof: the

French pay people to applaud for them. Not long ago there was a grand funeral of a man, who had for so many years taken the lead in the *claqué* at the Théâtre Français, that he had become quite a celebrated character.

Amusing scenes sometimes occur at the doors of theatres when some favourite piece is played. The public begin to collect, hours before the doors are opened, and arrange themselves in what is called a "tail," sometimes between wooden barriers set up for the purpose, or else along the pavement. Every man acquires the right of property in his place, and there is seldom any shoving. People often sell their posts, and some fellows actually gain their living by going and occupying a good place, and disposing of it, just before the doors open, to some eager amateur.

The French are fond of saying that the theatre has a moralising influence—a great mistake, except that it is always good to relieve the dullness of life by cheerfulness. The rays of happiness are smiles. In truth, most people are amused at theatres because they are willing to be so. It is astonishing with what slender straws the public will allow itself to be tickled. The wonder is that it does not get callous. I suppose, that if it is in the nature of jokers to steal, it is in the nature of the world to get habituated to laugh at the same jokes. Probably new combinations of

ideas, in the shape of wit, are only appreciated by the finer sort, who set the fashion to duller natures. Grimace and antic are the only things which all appetites can relish. They are the bread and cheese of the stage. Laughter attends upon them like a shadow. The generality of French dramatic pieces are extremely slight. They glide over the surface of surfaces, scarcely scratching the ground. The observations interspersed have no depth, no roots scarcely; and, though fresh and lively to the eye, are never worth plucking up: yet it seems they are thought worth transplanting to this soil. The fact is, in no country is there much to learn from the stage, except the manners of the stage itself. Actors are the most unphilosophical of men. With rare exceptions, they imitate only the gestures they behold; but not being capable of appreciating the passion in which these gestures took their rise, almost invariably caricature. It is, therefore, under a false pretence that the Government is induced in France to keep open most of the theatres by paying heavy subsidies. Amusement is a good thing, a wholesome thing; and if the State undertake to provide it, well and good. But to confound the stage with a chair of moral philosophy is absurd. The French are very fond of talking about morality. The most dissolute Bourgeois shrinks at times primly between his shirt collar, saying, "*J'ai des mœurs;*" but the pieces he and the public generally delight

in, either have no effect at all—probably the truth—or tend to destroy those things worth preserving, respect for marriage, respect for parents, and respect for reality.

However, I should be the last to propose shutting up the theatre in any country, because I think they are the signs, not the creators, of the state of morality. They ought to be free, moreover; amenable only to public opinion and the laws, just as books are. We should then hear no more of penny theatres demoralising juvenile audiences. It is worthy of remark, that in France the dramatic pieces that please the refined public are almost all, more or less, of equivocal morality; whilst at the Boulevard theatre, where the *ouvrier* and the *gamin* go, although there is a good deal of horror, the sympathies of the audience are always on the side of oppressed virtue. An adultress must be very winning, indeed, if she find favour there: whereas the bourgeoisie, the depositaries of public opinion, the Frenchmen *par excellence*, care for no piece in which two or three of the natural sentiments of mankind are not made light of. The *ouvrier* weeps over the beautiful maiden about to be led to death—for love's sake or for chastity; whilst the bourgeois who has strayed that way sniggers, and admires the fine limbs of Mademoiselle Chose, whom he always distinctly sees before him, despite her poetical adornments.

CHAPTER XI.

The French Army—Piou-pious—Military Character of the Population—The discharged Soldier—A Chasseur d'Afrique—Corsican Soldiers — M. Raudôt — Forced Recruitment — Invalid Young Men — Military Height — The Pillar of Order — The National Guard — The Garde Mobile — M. Lamartine — The Affair of June—M. Paul de Molènes—A ferocious Legitimist —How to judge of a Party—The Legitimists—Foreign Troops —The White Terror—1815—Vive le Roi—Massacre at Marseilles — The Mamelukes — Marshal Brune — Protestants at Nîmes — A French Judge Jeffreys — Religious Persecution — The Authorities—Committee of Massacre—General Ramel—Royalist Ladies—Marshal Ney—1816—Rising at Grenoble—Specimens of Royalist Style—Colonel Vautré—Royal Mercy—Murder and Torture – General Mouton—Sheep's Liver—Burlesque Affair at Orleans—Flaw in the French Character—Chances of a Restoration—The Orleanist Absurdity—Feeling of the Country—Origin of Bonapartism—Napoleonic Myth—Faults of all Parties—A Democratic Emperor.

In the present volumes my object is rather to describe some features of what may be called cultivated France—the France that boasts itself superior to all other nations in Christendom—than to make an elaborate analysis of the elements of society. It is not necessary to say anything of the Army, except in so far as it became an instrument in the *coup d'état*.

True, the military profession now takes precedence of all others; and both officers and soldiers show by their manners how well aware they are that they are the masters of the country. From what I have observed, it seems that in proportion as the power of the military has risen, the affection for them amongst the people has diminished. Formerly, a *piou-piou*—as the common soldier was somewhat contemptuously called—was treated wherever he went with a sort of paternal solicitude. He is now looked upon—unless rumours of wars have made him interesting—rather with suspicion than otherwise. For some time after the *coup d'état,* indeed, many who disapproved of that insurrection of authority ceased to have communication even with relatives who belonged to the army; and I believe that the regiments present in Paris on those fatal days are still *tabooed* in many circles. The French, however, are not usually obstinate in dislikes of this kind, and at critical times I have seen them greet the army with a ludicrous mixture of fear and affection.

A fact that must be borne in mind, if we would understand what takes place in France, is, that in every twenty years at least a million and a half of men are restored from the army to the plough or other occupations, for the most part tainted with laziness and licentiousness. I quote the following account from a French writer, rather an optimist

than otherwise, who published under the reign of Louis Philippe.

"Look," says M. Alletz, "at the soldier just freed from service. He spends before his departure, in some coarse pleasures, the money which he has received from home to enable him to return. Reduced to pawn a portion of his garments to supply the deficiency thus created, he reaches his native place half-naked, drooping with fatigue and hunger. In a few days is exhausted the natural joy he feels at finding himself among his friends again. Accustomed to the excitement of danger, if he have been in the field, or to the vagabond indolence which he leads in great cities during a long peace, he soon feels a heavy and a brutal *ennui*. Everything is strange and monotonous to him; the tranquillity of the country contrasts with his old habits; the uniformity of life which he is compelled to lead wearies him, used as he is to perpetual change; the solitude of the village gives no scope to his loquacity; the necessity of work alarms his indolence; even his newly-acquired liberty embarrasses a character broken by discipline; he misses the public places of the cities; *ennui* makes him irritable and hard; he seeks out old companions of arms and idleness, gets drunk with them, quarrels, ruins, or drives his family to despair; shortens, perhaps, the days of his mother; becomes an evil example to youth, excites the indig-

nation of all respectable people, is a cause of affliction and dishonour to his family, and disturbs the repose of the magistrate. It is a sad thing to say, but it is too frequent to find old soldiers among the greatest criminals. Louvel, Fieschi, Alibaud, moreover, had been soldiers."

The Frenchman under arms is naturally destructive. During the Revolution and the Empire, churches were turned into barracks. The consequence was that all the statues and ornaments were more or less injured. "Not many years ago," says M. Merimée, "a chasseur d'Afrique lodged a night with a blacksmith, who had taken up his abode in the church of La Charité, on the Loire. He slept in a place where was a bas-relief sitting upon clouds, and surrounded by angels and saints. He was tormented by bugs all night, and when he got up in the morning saw the bas-relief, and, addressing himself to the Eternal Father, said, 'Old fellow, it was you who invented bugs—take that.' So he knocked the work of art to pieces." The Corsican soldiers are different from the French; perhaps, because more Catholic. When encamped in churches, they do not wantonly destroy the frescoes, but cut away little bits for sale.

M. Raudôt, in writing on the state of the French army, says that it is recruited nearly entirely by young men, called against their will under the flag,

or by substitutes bought for money. Until lately, nearly every one had considered this mode of recruitment admirable. People are imbued with an idea, derived, or rather transported arbitrarily, from the classical republics, that every citizen ought to be a soldier. M. Raudôt explains, from his peculiar point of view, the non-adaptability of this idea to our modern Christian societies. I prefer quoting the opinions of native writers on this point, on which the French are peculiarly sensitive.

"Every year," says the same writer, "about three hundred thousand young men reach the age of twenty. Out of this number half only—and this is a deplorable but certain fact—are fit for military service. Of these, eighty thousand are declared to be soldiers, and sixty thousand generally are called upon to serve. Thus it appears, that in time of peace nearly one half of the valid young men in France pass the best years of their life in garrison. . . By taking them from their families, and devoting them to celibacy and libertinage, whilst the invalid portion are left to marry and found new families, a constant cause of moral and physical deterioration is created." He goes on to say, that the fifty thousand men who generally return per annum to civil life find it difficult to compete with the workmen whose education has not been disturbed. They generally go and inhabit towns, and, according to him, form an army always ready

of *émeute*. In civil war, therefore, it is against old soldiers that the young recruits have to fight.

The mortality among young soldiers is very great. The first year it is seven and a-half per cent, that is, greater among the *élite* of the youths than among the whole population, comprising the children and old men. Remarks have often been made on the small stature of the French soldiery. The military height is five feet nine inches French. It would be wrong, however, to suppose—and history, indeed, forbids us to do so—that the armies of our neighbours are, on this account, inefficient. The fact simply explains why French generals have seldom gained great victories, except by making their men act in masses. Desperate and enthusiastic courage requires personal or numerical weight as an adjunct.

Ever since the establishment of the Imperial Dictatorship, all kinds of means have been taken to keep the army in good humour, and, it would appear, successfully. The hired writers of the Court, perhaps going beyond their instructions, take every opportunity to maintain that the great pillar of order is the army. This is certain; but it might be politic to conceal the fact, and not to insist in season and out of season on the entire annihilation of all bourgeois influence, and especially on the banishment of the pen as a political lever. Mere brute force cannot continue long to keep a nation like the French in

servitude; and it would be wise to endeavour to corrupt literature, and induce one man, at any rate, who can unite the art of writing with a reputation for honesty, to beguile the weary moments of suspense.

We shall probably hear little more of the National Guard, as an instrument either of revolutions or of tyranny. That body is virtually dissolved, the middle classes, from amongst whom its members were taken, being almost unanimously opposed, on various grounds, to the present form of government. The nominal National Guard contains, I believe, about twenty thousand men. People are chosen arbitrarily by the authorities, and if they refuse to serve are put in prison. As much as possible, old soldiers are chosen for officers—old leather-breeches, as they are called. There is a great attempt at severity and discipline, but the thing does not take. In some quarters symptoms of discontent are so strong, that the National Guards, reduced as they are in numbers and dignity, are no longer called upon to act.

It was common for some time, and still is with a few writers, to speak with enthusiasm of the services rendered to the cause of order by the Garde Mobile, which is said to have "saved society," and so forth. I cannot think much of a cause which depended for its defence on a collection of frightful little savages

like that. The fact is that the affair of June, although it seemed to begin from below, was the development of a reactionary conspiracy, of which General Cavaignac and the Republican party were dupes, and which required—at least it was then so thought—a collection of all the unbearded ragamuffins, raked up from all the kennels of Paris, to carry out. M. Lamartine is very proud of his idea. He has no reason to be so; for it is quite certain that if, by a mere accident, the Garde Mobile had not been seized with a moment of bloody enthusiasm, the insurgents would have carried the day. We cannot, of course, regret that they did not; for, although bitterly goaded, many of their projects and principles were dangerous. But I question whether their success would have been so disastrous as was their defeat. The horrible cruelties committed by the victorious party, rather to revenge themselves for the fear they had undergone than from deliberate ferocity, created a breach between the working classes—who, to a man, sympathised with the insurgents—and the bourgeoisie, which has never been closed. At the *coup d'état*, many *ouvriers* gave as a reason why they abstained from fighting, that they wished to see the middle classes treated as the middle classes had treated them; and thus ignorantly left their best friends to be slaughtered, whilst their old enemies were hiding at home, and cursing "with white lips" both

the adversaries and the friends of the Constitution.

M. Paul de Molènes has recently published an account of his experiences amongst the rabble rout of beggars and discarded waiters that were petted and decorated for a few months, and then jeered at and dispersed. He does not say how he got amongst them. He talks very heroically about war, and pretends to look upon that institution as most glorious and delightful. He seems to have snuffed in with delight the smell of blood at the approach of June—regrets that he was not sent to murder people across the French frontier—but still thinks of those fatal days as of a festival. "Those days of June were for every one days of summer; for me they were days of summer and youth. Certes I should have preferred this great *mêlée*, this festival of cannon, this orgie of gunpowder, on the banks of the Rhine rather than in the midst of Paris; but still I am happy that I was present at those combats. I do not think that war is evil, and that chance and violence, that is to say, the powers which God supports without his force and his justice, are alone answerable for it. I think that God, on the contrary, has reserved it for himself; and, with due deference to the philosophical priests who unite with the Reformed Ministers in congresses, I believe it with the Bible, with the ritual, which say—the God of armies." It is scarcely neces-

sary to remark that this ferocious gentleman is a Monarchist and a Legitimist; and it will surprise no one to learn that, in a subsequent page of the same volume, he introduces an adultress sitting with her lover in raptures over the Imitation of Christ; after which they wander for some hours "in the garden of murmurs and mystical shadows."

Nothing is more unfair than to judge of a party by the crimes of its members. Yet as this has been, and is, the way in which the Republican party has been condemned, both in France and in England—as that party is still under the weight of accusations and reproaches for what it committed sixty years ago, in the midst not only of the convulsive agony of a revolution but with hostile armies on its frontiers—it may be as well to endeavour to give a rapid view of what the Legitimist party did under other circumstances. This time France was, indeed, covered by the troops of the enemy; but they came to assist in re-establishing a monarchical government, and to support, therefore, the Legitimist party. That party, consequently, had not the excuse of danger or terror; but merely obeyed those sanguinary instincts which seem to be unaccountably implanted in the French character. The ordinary English reading public knows a good deal about what is called the Reign of Terror; but very few among them are quite familiar with the details of

0f233

the White Terror, and they are, therefore, unable to appreciate the horror which the name of Bourbon excites in the humble classes—cannot understand the allusions which make the democracy and the army thrill with horror—and are not aware of the existence of one of the greatest auxiliaries of the present Government. That Government, it is true, started into existence in the midst of blood; but since its installation, after the victory, there have been but few executions. Exile and imprisonment have been the principal weapons employed.

In 1815—I rely on the statements of M. Vaulabelle, which have not been contradicted—the news of the battle of Waterloo was received in the south by cries of "*Vive le Roi!*" by pillage, and by massacres. The Royalist inhabitants of Marseilles drove out their garrison, and began to sack the houses of the Bonapartists, many of whom were massacred. A band of ruffians, hired by the Legitimists, proceeded to a poor quarter, where was established a colony of Mamelukes and Orientals, who had come from Egypt with Napoleon, and began to massacre them in cold blood. Those who endeavoured to fly were pursued in the streets, and even into the houses where they took refuge. Neither age nor sex was spared. Women and children were slaughtered for mere sport. An Egyptian woman leaped into the water, and tried to escape by swim-

ming to a ship. She was shot at in the water, and died crying "*Vive Bonaparte!*" The assassins then spread through the streets, killing every one who was pointed out as a Bonapartist or a Jacobin. It was not until next day that the bourgeoisie, fearing the pillage of their houses, took arms, and restored the city to comparative quiet.

These events, however, were the signals of massacre throughout the whole of the south of France. Marshal Brune was murdered by a furious mob at Avignon, dragged through the streets, and thrown into the river. A corps of volunteers was formed in Provence, which marched upon Nîmes, got possession of the town by a capitulation, and massacred the garrison after they had given up their arms. An appeal was made to religious bigotry; the Protestants, who formed more than a third of the population, were identified with the Bonapartists, and exposed to wholesale pillage and massacre. Then became celebrated that name of Trestaillons, which it is sufficient in France to pronounce to suggest all these horrors. He was a kind of self-appointed Judge Jeffreys, who went about condemning and slaughtering all whom he chose.

In that part of the country, as I have said, the passions excited were rather religious than political. The Catholic mob—excited, of course, by the priests—raged to and fro for weeks, committing unheard-of

atrocities: whilst the women in the public streets subjected their Calvinistic sisters to indecent and ignominious chastisement. The royal authorities looked on, and encouraged rather than blamed these villanous acts; and in order to exhibit their partiality more clearly, almost entirely exonerated the Catholics from the war contributions, levying seven-eighths of the sum required from the department on the Protestants and the Jews. Similar scenes to those at Nîmes took places at Uzès, where, however, in addition to miscellaneous slaughter, six prisoners, accused of Bonapartism, were given up by the authorities, two and two, to the chief of the massacrers, to be assassinated in the public place. I cannot, however, enumerate all the atrocities committed. They continued during two whole months, with the knowledge of the Government, the Chambers, and the Armies of Occupation; and ceased only by the intervention of an Austrian army and the Duc d'Angoulême. Such, however, was the fury of the Catholics and Royalists, that when this interference was withdrawn they began once more to attack the Protestants, when they collected in their chapels, and assassinated a general who endeavoured to interfere to keep the peace. In fine, the White Terror lasted in the department of the Gard for five months, during which a Committee of Massacre sat in a house at Nîmes, on the front of which, in huge

letters, were written these words: "THE BOURBONS OR DEATH." Afterwards, Trestaillons and some of his accomplices were arrested and brought to judgment; but although they admitted their crimes, they were unanimously acquitted, and carried in triumph through the city.

Meanwhile, at Toulouse, General Ramel was attacked in the street, and mortally wounded. A workman received him into his house, but he was not allowed to die in peace; for the assassins came back some hours afterwards, tore him out of his bed, and finished him. At Bordeaux, two twin-brothers, general officers, named Faucher, were juridically assassinated, with circumstances of excessive violence and horror. They went to the place of execution along streets the balconies of which were filled with Royalist ladies, shouting with delight, and waving white handkerchiefs. The condemnations of Labedoyère and Marshal Ney are well known. With reference to the latter there has been, perhaps, a good deal of misplaced pathos; but still, considering that he was condemned by men who were equally guilty of favouring the return of Napoleon from Elba, his execution had many of the features of a murder. The part played by the representative of England, the general who had fought against Ney and beaten him, and who yet insisted on his execution, is so painful, that I shall not dwell on it.

Early in 1816 there was an attempt at rising at Grenoble, in the interest of the Orleans party. It was suppressed without the loss of a single man on the part of the authorities, but six of the insurgents were killed. This easy victory was exaggerated by those who gained it into a wonderful triumph; and it is impossible to understand the French character as developed in the Royalist party—a party in all countries inclined to speak lightly of bloodshed when the humble are the sufferers—without reading the accounts published by the chief actors in that miserable event. They are too long to transcribe here, but the following phrases are characteristic:—"I dispersed them like dust," writes Colonel Vautré. "Three times, however, they charged me with the bayonet, crying, '*Vive l'Empereur!*' I forbade my men to fire; but ordered them to charge, and cut the throats of this *canaille* with their bayonets, to the cry of '*Vive le Roi!*' . . . I went to Lamure, preceded by terror. . . . I told the people that I was not sure whether I should not shoot them all, and burn their town. . . . I said to them, 'Your fathers and your children are nearly all dead at the gates of Grenoble. Go and look at their corpses. You, Mr. President of the Federates' (I had arrested that scoundrel), 'one of of your sons has been recognised among the dead. The other is believed to have been killed. Here,

Mr. Brigand, is one of my brave officers who has seen his hat and his sword.' This," continues the gallant writer, "was the result of our tragi-comedy."

I have already said that six of the insurgents were killed. Colonel Vautré, in true Falstaff style, raises their numbers to thirty; and in the official despatch of the general commanding the place occurs the following monstrous passage:—"*Vive le Roi!* my dear General; for three hours blood has not ceased to flow. *Vive le Roi!* my dear General; the corpses of his enemies cover all the roads around the town!" When the dead came to be counted, these hot Royalists were strangely disappointed; but they determined to make up by executions. Three days afterwards two prisoners were condemned without any attempt to bring witnesses against them, and executed; and a little later, thirty prisoners were brought before a council of war, presided over by the very Colonel Vautré whose words I have above quoted. Six of the unfortunate men were acquitted, because the Court itself admitted that they had no charge to bring against them. The others were condemned on the testimony of four soldiers, who were called up and ordered to identify the insurgents as having been among the band that attacked them at night. There were so many presumptions of innocence in favour of five of them, that the Council of War recommended them to royal

mercy, as less criminal in intention than the others; and afterwards positive proofs of the innocence of two more were brought forward. However, when the report of this monstrous trial was sent up to Paris, the king refused to take notice either of the recommendation to mercy or of the proofs of innocence brought forward, and ordered the whole number to be immediately executed. Among them was a lad of sixteen, who was only wounded at the first discharge, and who got up on his hands and feet, looking towards his assassins with imploring eyes. A second discharge, however, finished him, amidst the cries of horror and pity of the spectators. Really, after these frightful scenes, the Royalist party refers, with a very ill grace, to its sufferings in the last century.

In the month of May there was a sort of conspiracy got up by a police agent named Scheltein. Three men of very humble position were accused of distributing cards, bearing a masonic triangle and the words "Union, Honour, Country," which was taken to be a proof that they were organising a conspiracy. They were also accused of listening with approval to a proposal made by the police agent to blow up the Tuileries, but not a single witness was called to prove this fact. Still the unfortunate men were condemned to death. They were taken along the quays, walking barefooted in white shirts with a

black veil over their heads; and, being brought to the Place de Grève, were tortured before being guillotined by having their right hands chopped off with a hatchet!

It is needless to enumerate, however, all the frightful scenes of Royalist vengeance that took place, though we might find in some of the circumstances that attended them curious illustrations of the character and sentiments of a large portion of the aristocratic classes in France. For example, after the execution of General Mouton Duvernet, some Royalist ladies went and danced on the place of execution next day; and a banquet was organised to celebrate the event, in which a sheep's liver (*foie de mouton*), in allusion to the name of the General, was served up and stabbed by the guests one after the other!

A comic accompaniment to these horrible scenes took place at Orléans, where a full-length portrait of Napoleon, painted by Gerard, and an immense number of busts, flags, books, papers, engravings, and other objects, were thrown into a huge bonfire, not by a mob, but by the National Guard, and under the eyes of the Prefect, the President of the Royal Court, and the magistrates in their red robes, who joined hands and danced, like Macbeth's witches, round the bonfire, singing: "*On va leur percer le flanc, ran tan plan tire lire! On va leur percer le*

flanc ; ah ! que nous allons rire !" When the portrait was brought forth, an officer cut it open with his sword, and the crowd insisted on turning the head down, crying: "Down with his head, the scoundrel!" The Prefect, the President of the Royal Court, and the Mayor, carried torches and set fire to the pile, crying, "Death to Bonaparte the anthropophagus;" and the National Guards, "electrified," says the account, charged the busts and statues with their bayonets. Is it possible for the wildest imagination to conceive the Lord Mayor and the Lord Chancellor performing such antics to celebrate the overthrow of their political opponents?

I have collected these almost incredible facts, partly as counterparts to similar ones commonly repeated in accusation against the Republican party. They will show that excesses which are attributed by interested persons to the supporters of extreme liberal opinions are really derived from some flaw in the French character. It must be admitted, however, that it is more astonishing and more disgraceful to find this mixture of bloodiness and burlesque in a party which pretends to a monopoly of refinement and religion, than those classes which have been brutalised by long years of oppression. I am firmly persuaded, that if the Legitimist party were ever to return to power — a wild supposition — we should have a repetition of these savage, and ridiculous

scenes. At any rate, this is the firm belief of the French; and those who, by confining their observation to a few salons and by reading a disgraceful paper or two, are led to suppose that, even in its present abasement, France looks towards any member of any branch of the old reigning family for assistance, commits a most egregious error. The Government of Louis Philippe had blood upon it likewise—blood not very sacred in the eyes of the powerful, the witty, or the wise—blood of the poor—mere units, whose absence no one felt—no one but their wives and families. We Englishmen easily forget these things; and think it very absurd that so convenient an arrangement as an Orleanist Restoration, for example, cannot be brought about; but the French people, though it forgives, to a certain extent, the blind instrument of a king's cruelty—the army—will never forgive, even if circumstances compel it for a time to submit to once more, either of its two condemned dynasties. It would appear, too, that in no section of the people is the feeling of mingled abhorrence and contempt with which the relics of the Bourbon family are regarded stronger than in the army.

I believe that this feeling, based partly on tradition, and exaggerated, perhaps, by prejudice, has played a much more active part in deciding the turn of events than foreigners are disposed to admit or to

understand. Yet we ought to know how greatly the stability of dynasties depends on the estimation in which a monarch is held. There existed and still exists, moreover, in certain classes of the country, especially among the soldiers, a strange kind of thing, much resembling a superstition, now called Bonapartism. It bears every character, indeed, of an unreasoning faith, and was based on a myth; for the popular conception of Napoleon merits no other name. Before the defeat at Waterloo, the educated classes were weary of their Emperor; and, indeed, so were the whole country, even the peasantry to a certain extent, although this sordid mass were averse to a Restoration, because they feared to lose the land which they had divided amongst themselves. On the return of the Bourbons three hundred thousand soldiers were disbanded, and the country was covered by men whose enthusiasm for their chief was kept alive by persecution. The police used to make war on pictures and images of Napoleon, searching every veteran they met for these and other relics. Those who could preserve a little portrait stuck it up on their wall, and pointed it out to their children, saying: "*Voilà le Bondieu!*"—so that in very ignorant places (no exception in France) Napoleon became really and truly confounded with the Divinity. Few attempts were made by the two cousin-dynasties that governed the country for about thirty years to en-

lighten the peasantry, which, with a sort of sublime stupidity, worked and waited until, at the Revolution, by the very fact of their possession of land, they became the depositaries of political power, when they naturally ranged themselves behind the man who came forward as the representative of their God.

The Bonapartists—for there was, besides, a small political party that could be so called—during the times of Constitutional government always joined the Republicans in opposition, and were too eagerly accepted, because it was thought they might act upon the army. The favourite Opposition orators before the Revolution of 1830 were Lamarque and Foy—not advocates, soldiers. Their great appeal was always—"We shed our blood fighting for our country against you (the Royalists), who fought against it." After 1830, Louis Philippe leaned for a short time on the Republican and Bonapartist parties, on Marshal Gerard and on Lafayette. General Pajol was named Commander of Paris; and Bugeaud, who had been forced to quit the army and become clerk to a notary, was made a colonel, and put in the way of advancement. Then was re-erected on the Place Vendôme the statue which Louis Napoleon has since himself called "The Great Elector." He and his courtiers knew well the feeling of the peasantry, and counted on that as their great fulcrum. The event has proved they were right; for, after all, the *coup*

d'état, historically considered, was nothing but the victory of the ignorant and enthusiastic country over the cultivated but corrupt cities. It is true, that had any of the parties that have undertaken to govern France, Royalist or Republican, possessed any sound political intelligence, they might have provided against that disaster. The Republicans are especially to blame, because, by a wonderful want of logical power, they not only accepted the assistance of the Bonapartists, but persuaded themselves, and assisted in persuading the country, that there was some connexion between the mission of the Emperor and the mission of Democracy. Many persons still cling to the same delusion; and I have met some young gentlemen in England who think they have profited by studying the history of our Commonwealth, and seem to imagine that whatever overthrows a king or an aristocracy must be worthy of admiration, as expressing a democratic idea. They may some of these days be led to erect a Hurricane or a Pestilence into a Divinity.

CHAPTER XII.

Love of Freedom—Hasty Politicians—Montesquieu and Virtue—Tory Machiavels—Principle of a Republic—Educating Influence of Monarchies—French Republicans—Waterloo of Liberty—English Opinions—The Socialists—My Credo—A pure Despotism—Philosophy of History—Turning a Handle—Socialist View of Napoleon—The Political Economists—Considérant and Larochejaquelin—Universal Suffrage—Absurdities of Socialism—The Middle Classes—A Ministerial Argument—M. Ledru Rollin—The "Illustrations"—Political Immorality—Mental Reservation and Expediency—The Circulars—Monarchical Manœuvres—Their Punishment—Influence of the Clergy—Evil everywhere in Politics—The Church and the Emperor—A *Mot* of Prince Metternich—Friars—Priests and Women—Abbé Michon—Accusation of Grisettes—A Materialist in the Fields—A strange Atheist—The Clergy and the *Coup d'etat.*

THE last days of the French Republic will be remembered with melancholy by all true lovers of freedom. When I speak of freedom, and the love thereof, it is not in any sentimental mood. In the early stages of society—when the belief was prevalent that a perfect organisation might be attained, when man imagined that he could fashion his own Paradise—enthusiasm was more excusable than now, that we are obliged to admit forms of government to be only more or less excellent means of carrying on the public busi-

ness of a country. Complete happiness cannot be achieved by any set of regulations whatever; and the highest political wisdom could only lead to a state in which all artificial impediments to the development of physical and moral well-being should be removed. There would still remain the natural causes of misery—our own vices and imperfections: quite enough for us to deal with, in all conscience.

Many weak persons, wearied by contemplation of the difficulties that naturally occur at the outset of any great experiment, are prone, from a kind of impatient indolence, to wish and hasten its abandonment and a return to clumsy practice sanctioned by time. They have noticed hastily that the French have twice failed to form a Republic, and that they are, as a nation, deprived of several of the intellectual and moral qualities necessary to the well-working of free institutions. So the cry is raised for a return to tyranny; and, when the Tyrant is found, he is welcomed as a Saviour. The great claim, however, which the French have to the enjoyment of liberty is, that their best men most ardently desire it; and this aspiration constantly manifesting itself, no matter under what eccentric forms, in the midst of a corrupt and jaded society, is a cheerful promise for the future, which we should hail and encourage, instead of vituperating and spitting upon, as Englishmen are too much inclined to do.

Montesquieu has said an absurd thing, which simple Democrats and cunning Royalists have grasped at as a weapon; namely, that "Virtue is the principle of a Republic." All we ardent believers in the Good Time Coming, complacently adopted this epigram when we used to debate the fortunes of States—long before we knew how to shape our own fortunes—and founded thereon withering sarcasms against corrupt monarchies. But we were no match for the Machiavels on the other side, who hypocritically admitted the truth of the maxim, and proceeded to argue that, as we are all at present a set of rascals, why we must put up with the government we have got! Impure, hack politicians, go about declaring, in a contrite tone, that of course a Republic in theory is admirable; but what materials can you find to construct one? Then they quote and requote Montesquieu; and the pretenders to wisdom, whose ideas have been floating about in an obscure twilight, are suddenly illumined, and repeat with parrot intonation, "Virtue is necessary in a Republic."

No such thing. Virtue is necessary in all human communities, which otherwise would cease to exist. It abounds in England, and accounts for our prosperity; may be found in France, and explains how it bears up against all its misfortunes; and, no doubt, maintains a struggling life in Austria and Russia. Properly speaking, a Republic has less

need of it than any other state; for the more perfect does the machinery of government become, the more can individual excellence be dispensed with. However, it is quite true, that to allow democratic institutions to reach the magnificent development of which they are capable, it is necessary that we should be cultivated to the highest extent. What I point out as a mere sophism is this, that men must attain that extreme cultivation before they are fit to carry on their own affairs. If this were the case, well might we despair of the future; for under what Monarchy can nations be educated for the higher enjoyments of liberty?

The French Republicans, whose apology I have no intention of writing, will compel history—despite contemporary misunderstandings—to give its verdict in their favour to this extent, that they saw, and now see, that their country has nothing further to learn in bondage; and that, from peculiar circumstances, they are deprived of the opportunity of passing, as we have, through the ordeal of constitutional monarchy. They have no family sufficiently humble and moderate to reign without governing, and are reduced to the alternative of crouching slavery or dangerous freedom. Political writers in England are hasty to make a choice for them; and there is not a Noodle in society who refrains from saying that Despotism is the only government fit for

France. I should be the last to endeavour to exculpate that nation for the cowardice with which it threw away all its rights, to lighten it in its helter-skelter flight at the great Waterloo of Liberty; and if Louis Napoleon be applauded as a Scourge, I have nothing to say. It is not, however, in this light that he is regarded by his admirers in our country. They are chiefly grateful to him for putting down the Republicans and the Socialists; and if there be anything that they regret in the past, it is the caricature of constitutional government under Louis Philippe; if there is anything they hope for in the future, it is a part-jesuitical, part-liberal, part-right-divine, part-democratic, nondescript, piebald Restoration, which could only be acceptable to France as the antechamber of another Revolution. No one seems to look upon the defunct Republic as anything but an impertinent attempt to get a-head of ourselves; or aware, that, no matter through what struggles, what sufferings, what disasters, it is absolutely necessary for France, having worked off the disease of dynasties, to revert to its attempt at self-government.

I have mentioned the Socialists, but have no space to enter into an examination of their character and doctrines. Both seem to me to be considerably misunderstood in this country; but as they are, in part, themselves to blame for this, I do not wish to be their Don Quixotte. They have even placed

themselves out of the ordinary category of the "unprotected," and have courted rather than avoided attack. It is scarcely necessary to tell the reader who has followed me up to this point, that I am not a Socialist. I differ from that galaxy of schools on one fundamental point especially,—the belief that any thinker, or set of thinkers, can brood over the chaos of modern society and create form by invented laws. Nor do I admit that society is in a state of absolute chaos. True progress, according to my view, is the increase of the number of individuals who detach themselves from the inorganic mass of mankind, and develop their physical, intellectual, and moral qualities to the full extent of which they are capable under the conditions in which God has placed us.

In a pure Despotism, one man only absorbs, as it were, the vital principle of a whole nation; and small historians are never so much at ease as when the narrative of an empire's fortunes becomes a mere series of biographies. History has often been reproached with neglecting to trouble itself about the people's doings, and dwelling only on the actions of kings and great men; but an attempt to do otherwise produces a succession of essays on manners, and not political records and pictures of public life, which history should be The truth is, that in purely monarchical times a nation is generally per-

sonified by one man, and it is quite sufficient to know what he did and thought: for no sooner are his subjects astir, waking up for the future, than they come in contact with him, and their adventures are necessarily interwoven with his.

Let us not flatter the people by telling them that their ancestors in times gone by did things fit to record that have been suppressed by court-writers. They only become worthy of the rounded period and the measured sentence when they do things that the world cannot fail to hear of, which Fame roars in the uttermost parts of the earth before Thucydides has culled his words, or Tacitus ground the point of a sarcasm. Thus it is that in free states alone—or in the wrecks of free states, floating about ere they founder in the sea of Eternity—can great historians find fitting themes for their genius. Annalists and chroniclers, in shoals, rise up to celebrate the *gesta* of monarchs—"fathers of their people." I have no doubt that the present Emperor of the French will inspire as much eloquence as did Napoleon I. At any rate it is quite certain, that, for a time at least, the nation has become once more personified in a single man, and that it will be quite sufficient for Sir Archibald Alison, when he has caught up the present time, to narrate the doings at the Tuileries, Compiègne, or Fontainebleau, to enable us to understand precisely what have been

the intellectual movements in France since the year 1852. Our eminent Economist, Mr. Ricardo, has said, that if the net revenue of a nation remain the same, it is no matter how much population is diminished; in which case, cleverly replies M. Sismondi, the most perfect state would be that in which the Sovereign of England, by turning a handle, could do all the work of the country. In reality, Louis Napoleon now turns the handle which makes France go round.

It would be a great mistake to suppose that the Socialists, as such, object to this state of things. The uncompromising sectaries, indeed, rejoice; for nearly all the schools which have aimed at reconstructing society have endeavoured to do so, more or less undisguisedly, by means of despotism. The same fanatics, whose efforts have made society heave and tremble, like a plain about to give birth to a volcano, for so many years past, now look complacently on the Emperor who has suddenly vaulted into the throne, admire the feat as they would admire the dexterity of a clown in a pantomime, and predict, with a faith worthy of admiration, that in spite even of himself, forcibly, necessarily, he will be compelled to work out some portion at least of their principles. They do not like him personally; but they know that all he has learned of political science has been learned from their books, that his mind has

been hammered into shape by their teaching, and that whenever, therefore, he attempts to act without advice, which is always the suggestion of his nature, he must, to a certain extent, apply their theories. They also believe, that at the present stage of the history of the world no other ideas but their own can be applied; and they, too, look forward to a Millennium.

I wish particularly to speak without disrespect of the Socialist writers—in their character of philosophers, not of politicians. It must be confessed that, for the last thirty years, they alone have kept speculation alive on the most important matters affecting man's worldly destiny. They have stirred all questions, and thrown light upon most; and have done especial service in weakening the influence of that sort of geometrical politics which was getting so much into favour, and which endeavours to treat men as so many triangles, circles, and cubes, designates their dimensions by A, B, C, and rubs them out when in the way like figures drawn with chalk on a black board. I have no desire to dispute the *truth* of the harshest deductions of political economy, at least for the present; but I speak of the *spirit* in which it wrote, and would write still, if not forced by criticism into perpetual provisos. The Socialists had a fine opportunity, and made use of it to advantage. This was the great reason of

their success with serious thinkers, and is their chief title to praise. Into the aberrations, extravagances, and abominations of a few amongst them, I cannot go; but this must be said, that the worst things they recommend or apologise for are practised by the antagonists who cry out against them, and that, in general, their errors are of speculation, not of conduct. One day M. Victor Considérant rose in the National Assembly, pale, hungry-looking, lath-like, and said, in a solemn tone of voice, "Humanity is thirsting for enjoyment!" "Those words are the words of a brute!" shouted M. de Larochejaquelin, rearing his portly form and vinous face at the opposite extreme of the hemicycle. This anecdote symbolizes pretty well the present state of things in France. By the way, the Marquis de Larochejaquelin, who so violently opposed the *coup d'état*—in words, which is as much as we could expect a Marquis to do—has accepted the equivocal dignity of Senator, and justifies himself by saying that he bows to universal suffrage. Now, I am rather a partisan of universal suffrage myself; but if it voted that black was white, I should be silent without consenting. Of what party would M. de Larochejaquelin have been in Sodom and Gomorrha?

It is the custom now amongst the middle classes, who groan under the new tyranny, to accuse Socialism of the misfortunes which have befallen the country;

and certainly the absurdities of that doctrine's partisans were cleverly taken advantage of by the President and his faction. But if the middle classes had been anything save what I have described them to be; if they had respected what Socialism was accused of attacking; if amongst them there had been any other guarantee for morality than the law; if they had regarded religion as anything better than a composing draught for exciteable women; if they had deemed the property of others sacred as well as their own; if they had not practically treated labour as a slave, and denied the right of a man freely to dispose of his own arms and intelligence; above all, if they had taken the trouble to study what alarmed them, or had been capable of understanding the elementary principles of politics; instead of being foolishly frightened into abject but snarling submission—like Caliban under the heel of Prospero—they might now have been ruling France by their representatives. For, after all, it is culpable to try and conceal the fact, that Universal Suffrage in France deliberately chose, not ignorant boys, not workmen, not demagogues, but nearly all the personages whose names had made the country illustrious under a constitutional government—lawyers, political writers, noblemen, poets, magistrates, diplomatists, statesmen, almost every name that will stud the pages of history; and that it was these men, assembled as the delegates of

ten millions of electors, who proved themselves incapable of conducting the business of the country, credulous as children, timid as hares, the tool and the foil of a single man, protected from their authority during the greater part of the time by public opinion alone!

A Minister has taken what he considers a powerful argument, from recent occurrences in France, against an extension of the suffrage in this country; and it appears that this said argument is considered good for use in refined circles. But unless our aristocracy be as corrupt, or rather as effete as that of France—unless our middle classes be infected with the same kind of immorality, equally weak, equally ignorant, equally timorous, there is no parallel between the cases at all; and the attempt at reasoning I have referred to is merely an insult to this country. It is not universal suffrage that has been tried and found wanting in France, but the class from which alone universal suffrage could prudently choose its representatives. A great deal of blame has been cast upon M. Ledru Rollin for his suggestion, that workmen ought to have been elected to the Constituent Assembly; and certainly that was an unwise thing to say in the face of a conceited bourgeoisie, that fancied itself to be the culminating point of humanity. The great Tribune, however, knew very well how the Republic was menaced. He knew that the people of

France were proud of what it was the fashion to call their "illustrations;" but that these said illustrations were, in general, so totally destitute of moral principle, so utterly contemptuous of truth, that they would go down on their knees—abjure Legitimacy, Orleanism, Bonapartism—swear, curse, and get elected; and then at once begin to intrigue and conspire against Democracy, which they had kissed, and hugged, and coaxed, in the hour of danger. Talk of Louis Napoleon's perjury, indeed! How many other men not only took oaths to defend the Republic, which they were preparing to overthrow, but actually outbid the Republicans themselves in the extravagance of their levelling enthusiasm! If by any chance our present Constitution were overthrown, and the English nation were called upon to elect an Assembly, many strange sights would, no doubt, be seen; but I am quite sure we should not meet on the hustings our landed aristocracy and our country gentlemen basely professing to be converted to the extremest doctrines of popular government—making Bright and Cobden appear Conservatives by contrast, and running neck-and-neck with Julian Harney and Ernest Jones!

It is true that we are not blessed with the doctrine of mental reservation—that thimbleriggery of the conscience—or with the equally convenient theory, according to which the opponents of the Jesuits

maintain that, in politics, expediency is identical with right. When, therefore, in the imprudent circulars by which M. Ledru Rollin revealed his secret thoughts, he hinted the necessity of restricting the number of People's Representatives taken from the middle classes, it was clear that he foresaw the disgraceful "dodge" by which the monarchical parties —perhaps rather acting from habitual dishonesty than from concert—would acquire sufficient ascendancy in the Government to enable them to disgust the nation with the name of a Republic. How wonderfully clever did this manœuvre appear to them! Not an opportunity was lost of carrying it out. Taxes were increased in the name of the Republic; the embarrassments left by the Monarchy were officially attributed to the Republic; all misfortunes, all disasters, all insurrections, all loss of influence, though brought about designedly, were represented as natural consequences of a Republic. What a fine piece of poetical justice was seen when these perfumed Machiavels, whilst adding up, in a bye-place which they fancied to be the centre, the results of their political sum—saying, so much misery inflicted, so much imprisonment, so much bloodshed, make a Restoration—were suddenly swept away, and overwhelmed by a corner of the avalanche that buried in the same hour the liberties of the country!

I have several times alluded casually to the

influence which the clergy in France exercise upon political affairs: in every case it has been bad, and indeed wherever a priest—whether he derives authority from the Roman Pope, or chooses a temporal Pope, or is his own Pope—interferes in matters of government, it is always to endeavour to apply some principle repugnant to the feelings of human nature. The ecclesiastical mind, even in its purest state, seems incapable of discerning the difference between moral and civil laws, and is always inclined to call in the sword of power to enforce religious duties. I believe that it is right to make the Sabbath a day of cheerful rest, but I would not pass a law to compel my neighbour to observe it as I do. I do not feel a call to be virtuous for other people, finding it a hard matter to be virtuous for myself. No priest can make this distinction. I speak now of the pure. How many there are who think they escape the obligation of doing good themselves, if they force the world by whips and goads into the right path!

It is difficult to say what are the real feelings of the clergy in France towards the present Government; but one thing is certain, that at the *coup d'état* the whole Gallican Church—following partly the instinct of all churches, partly influenced by promises and threats—threw their weight into the scale of usurpation. Their sagacity told them that there was great probability that the new state of things would

be tolerably lasting; and they knew of the saying of Prince Metternich: "An usurpation that lasts is a legitimacy that is beginning,"—a curious admission, by the bye, for a supporter of arbitrary government. Perhaps, in their hearts, the majority of the upper clergy still yearn for Henri V.

A new sight in Paris at the present day is the appearance in the streets, of friars of all orders in their coarse robes, rope girdles, and bare feet. Men of war and men of religion, indeed, swarm everywhere; and, no doubt, as much gratitude as the Church can afford has been earned. Some Catholic friends, however, whisper to me, that already has the Emperor done as much as he can; another dynasty would do more! Ingratitude! No. When once the clerical influence becomes dominant in a mind, it is useless to apply the ordinary vocabulary. A true Catholic — and, indeed, an extreme Protestant — ceases to be a man and becomes another thing, which might be respectable, if anything could that had abdicated its individuality.

The influence of priests over women in France is still great, and seems, indeed, on the increase. This is the door through which slavish notions enter a family; and not only slavish notions, but, I am assured, immoral practice: which is likely, as these things generally go together. Nothing would be more absurd than to imagine that every priest who obtains

complete mastery over a woman's mind must necessarily dispose of her person. In fact, priests are but men; and besides, many, perhaps most, priests are good men. The Catholic Church can show as bright examples of piety as the Protestant. Wholesale accusations can come only from prurient minds. But even Romish priests will admit that there is in France a general and sincere belief throughout the educated classes that a Confessor or "Director" often merges into a lover. The Abbé Michon, in his "Essay on Woman," informs us that men of the world, when they read a celebrated work by Michelet, said to themselves—they were married men—"Ah! we understand now why the curé laughs to himself as he passes us!" This is a strange admission to make, but it coincides with all I have heard. Ask any grisette whose word you can trust. She will almost always tell you that the first immoral ideas ever suggested to her came from a priest. One has to say that M. le Curé took her to the theatre in plain clothes; the other, that he gave her queer books; the other, that he invited her home to be catechised; the other, that he told her that telling lies for personal advantage was no sin. This last illustration was given me by a married woman, who related how a priest had tried to seduce her. She was maintaining that it would be wrong to deceive her husband, and her ghostly father was endea-

vouring to calm her conscience. Of course, it is impossible to know how often similar scenes occur. I have heard of hundreds of corroborative facts. If all be not mere calumnies, however, we can easily understand how the French, rather from prejudice than from reason, are disposed to verge towards infidelity.

The abbé whom I have already quoted relates how he once met a man in the fields, who hastened to inform him, as if it were an interesting fact, that he believed "neither in heaven nor in hell." On being mildly expostulated with, he grew warm, and began to attack the clergy, saying, among other fine things, "Those gentlemen in black tried to persuade us that Voltaire would not be admitted into Paradise; but when he presented himself at the gates, St. Peter opened them back on their hinges, and ushered him in with a bow." I believe that this somewhat burlesque anecdote illustrates the mental state of most of the persons who glory in professing themselves Materialists. I once met an English workman—a good sort of fellow enough—who was very loud in assertion of irreligious opinions. I was drawn into conversation with him, and found that he had suffered some persecutions, "for conscience sake," as he described it. He was full of indignation against the world for turning a cold shoulder to him. "It isn't fair," said he. "*When*

they meets a Hatheist they bowls him down!" "Well, sir," replied I, "so they ought. You have bowled down something rather more respectable than yourself, or they would have paid no attention to you." He could not understand it. Why should they bowl him down? He never "bowled nobody" down for their creed. Wasn't it a *divine* precept, "Do as you would be done by?" When I read M. l'Abbé's anecdote I was reminded of this unfortunate victim of opinion.

The clergy and their supporters in France pretend that the country is gradually coming round to religion, or rather to Catholic doctrines. No doubt some ground may have been gained upon weak minds, wearied with the continual agitation of the last few years. Besides, religion has been taken up by some as a fashion—a disastrous sign. I do not believe, however, that anything has occurred to induce thinking men in France to draw nearer the Church. On the contrary, the fact that the black robe ranged itself on the side of the red pantaloon on the very first day of the Prætorian insurrection of December, 1851, will never be forgotten, either by the Bourgeoisie or the Democracy.

CHAPTER XIII.

The French Ouvriers—Strikes in England and France—The Livret — Conciliation — Power of the Working Classes — Political Opinions—Different Grades of Workmen—Poverty in France—Socialism—Levelling Doctrines—Mr. Dickens—Various Monopolies—Influence on Character—Expenditure for Comfort—Dirt—Education of the Ouvriers—Their Manners—Marriages—An ancient Bride—Places of Amusement—Songs—Workmen, how treated by the Government—Dangerous Classes—M. Frégier—The Chiffonniers—Number Seven—A Classical Encounter—Medical Ragman—An Interloper—Miserable Classes—Communism—Theory of the Commonwealth—The Dividers—Taxation—"Utopia."

My plan does not lead me to describe the state or character of the working classes of Paris. As, however, I have alluded to the fact, that under the reign of Louis Philippe labour was not free, I may as well explain what that expression means. I shall do so by a comparison. Whilst these pages are going through the press, the papers are full of accounts of a strike that has taken place in a manufacturing town. Without entering into the question of "strikes," I must observe that there is evidently something very unsatisfactory in the relations of capital and labour

when there is left no other means of bringing about an adjustment of rival claims than this most wasteful one. However, even those who fully sympathise with the masters against the men, admit the right of the latter to "play" if they please. This has never been the case in France. Whenever a strike takes place, certain persons are singled out as ringleaders, and severely dealt with by the law. I remember an instance in which twenty were tried in the most summary manner, and sentenced to one and two years' imprisonment. It should also be kept in mind that a French workman is registered, as our seamen are, and bound to be provided with a little book (*livret*), which serves as a passport and a testimonial. Masters sometimes, when offended by a workman, write a damning character of him in his *livret*, which he dare not destroy. In this way he may be prevented from ever obtaining employment again.

All Governments have looked with suspicion and hatred upon this large and intelligent class; and after the Republic had been proclaimed—when the Bourgeoisie got the upper hand, instead of endeavouring to loosen the chains of the workmen, it desired to rivet them tighter. The French middle classes do not understand the word "conciliation" to mean anything but repression with the strong hand; for which they were deservedly rewarded, by being told

by the government papers, whilst the echoes of the cannon of the Boulevards had not yet died away, that the work of Louis Napoleon was a work of "conciliation!"

The *ouvriers* in France, as distinguished from the agricultural labourers, or *propriétaires*, and the shopkeepers little and great, are necessarily a very small minority. Even with the assistance of the intelligent sections of the middle classes—the students, the artists, and other professional men, who hold the same or similar opinions—they are vastly inferior in numbers to the inert or conservative members of the community. Their power of thought, however, really doubles their strength, and makes them imagine it to be tenfold; and this is the reason why they have adopted predilections for a particular form of government, which allows greater development of individual worth, and why they constantly endeavour to establish that form by reason or by force.

I suppose it is scarcely necessary for me to observe, that all this is not intended to mean that the French workmen are universally intelligent or respectable, or that they are all agreed in theoretical republicanism. Many of them are mere Socialists, and look upon the State as a piece of machinery, whose duty it is to provide them, not only with subsistence, but with enjoyment. Others are thoughtless savages, busy only with the cares of animal life,

worshippers of tyranny, sceptics in every department —food for the cannon or the guillotine. Their worst features are described by M. Frégier, who looks at human nature with the eye of a policeman, and philosophises in the tone of a detective. I have found them too various in character to describe under a few general heads. A certain amount of good may, however, be predicated of them all. They are, as a class, less corrupt than the bourgeoisie—not that their conduct is less "repulsive," for, of course, it is more so: a rogue in white gloves and patent leathers may pass where a corduroy-dressed villain would not be suffered—but they act more consistently on principle, and their souls are by no means so distorted.

I speak now of the class of *ouvriers* who, by the amount of their earnings, are enabled to exhibit individual character, and to live with something of the independence of men. In many cases, and in many periods, this has not been always so, either in France or in England. Before the establishment of free trade the public used to be shocked by sanitary reports, containing the most horrible revelations—facts that proved the existence of large masses living, not from choice, but necessity, in brutal promiscuity; and I imagine that time has not yet been allowed for the habits then acquired to be lost. In France—despite the complacent assertions of

economical writers when they institute comparisons —more misery has been experienced than in England. The comfort of a French *ouvrier* would, indeed, be considered poverty amongst us. Socialism, which is as old as the hills, and expresses the aspirations of the human race after indefinite material happiness, owes its success in modern times to the misery created by the manufacturing system under the guidance of political martinets, who would continue to apply rules of discipline now that were invented for another age.

One of the most successful epigrams directed against democracy—which deals with social reform without endeavouring to apply Utopian theories—is, that its tendency is to "level:" in fact, to give every man, woman, and child, sevenpence halfpenny a-day, and bid them be joyful. I call this an epigram, though it is generally put forward as a profound argument. But there are various kinds of levelling. The ocean is level, though its billows rise and fall, and are not frozen into a huge cold flat. What is meant by levelling, in a philosophical sense, is clearing away all the artificial causes which make men different from one another, not only in station, but in mind—aye, and in body, too. Mr. Dickens, possibly with a view of serving the cause of reform, is fond of painting the monsters which the womb brings not forth, but which cir-

cumstances create. No doubt many of his characters may be called "exaggerated," in the ordinary sense of the word; but if we look close to great historical pictures, we shall find the paint heaped up in disagreeable ridges, and colours placed in impossible juxtaposition. The general effect of contrast is observable only from a distance; and so, if we cast a rapid glance over Mr. Dickens's Gallery of Portraits, we shall have an impression sufficiently consonant to nature to enable us to argue upon it. Experience, also, is there to give evidence. We may maintain, then, that society, as at present constituted, contains causes which give a monopoly of comfort, of knowledge, and of beauty to some—no matter what the proportion—whilst others are distorted, physically and intellectually, and suffer the extremes of misery. If, then, it can be shown—as most certainly it can—that most of these causes are not only created by man, but often wilfully created, the case of democracy is clearly made out; and the French *ouvrier* is absolved from the charge of being a mere amateur revolutionist.

Nothing is so difficult as to estimate in what degree character and manners are influenced from without. According to some, circumstances shape us altogether; and reformers have frequently been misled so far as to base their demands for new regulations on this strange belief, demanding, at the

same time, to be empowered to "create new circumstances!" But never, by culture and watering, can you change a gooseberry-bush into an oak; though, by trying to procure acorns, you may get better gooseberries. This premised, it is worth while to point out how rapidly the shape, size, and condition of dwellings, influence the characters of men. It has been said that, if shambles were built on any spot, and all who chose were allowed to inhabit them, they would soon be occupied by a race of beings lower than any yet known. Indeed, in the present style of civilisation, men require to be forced or lured into good habits. Most of the lower classes, in England especially, when left to themselves, even if in tolerable prosperity, grudge expenditure for comfort. The last want felt by the dirty is cleanliness. In France the same remark is not so applicable; for there, both men and women—at least, in Paris—have a certain respect for their persons, and spend a much greater proportion of their earnings in dress and toilette than individuals in corresponding stations with us. Even masons live almost entirely on bread, cheese, and soup, in order to be tolerably well dressed. This fact excites the jeers of full-fed Englishmen, but is really admirable, unless we admit that beef is the object of life.

Altogether the *ouvriers*—I mean now the skilled workmen of France—are distinguished by a certain

gentleness of bearing and elegance of demeanour; not perceptible, perhaps, to a stranger, who looks for these qualities only when accompanied by a fashionable dress. None of the lower classes of Paris have that brutal habit of insulting foreigners in the streets on account of any peculiarities of dress or appearance, which is so common in England. On my return from the East, I wore the *tarboosh* for some time, without provoking any remark—except from one person; and that person was an Englishman, who had just emerged from Meurice's hôtel!

The French workmen speak in very good language, and are far better informed on history and politics than the ordinary bourgeois. They read much, and know—not critically, yet in a very solid manner—all about the literature of their country. But this comparison with the lower bourgeoisie—that is, the shopkeeping class—scarcely suggests the truth; for they, as a rule, read nothing but a single paper, and are perfectly destitute of information. A workman, on the contrary, of the better sort, has his mind full of acquired facts, sometimes oddly arranged, sometimes accompanied by strange theories; but still, there he is, a man who has studied what he has been instructed to call "the fortunes of humanity,"—that is, the history of France—who is perfectly familiar with the doings of the great Revolution—convinced of the sacred right of man to take

charge of his own affairs if he pleases—able to give a reason for the faith that is in him—and sufficiently enthusiastic to be ready, at a moment's notice, to risk his life for the defence of his ideas. The existence of such a body of men in a country—though in the proportion of leaven to dough—is sufficient to account for revolution against all forms of despotism; and we may be quite sure that, unless the present Emperor succeed in totally destroying it, which is impossible, there is no chance of a new Dynasty being founded in France.

The manners of the *ouvriers* I have no space to describe. In some respects they resemble those of the middle classes to a wonderful extent; but they have many peculiarities. A considerable number are addicted to drinking, not only wine, but spirits; and are, consequently, disorderly and immoral. The practice of concubinage is very general; but the workmen do not change about so much as the students,—whose manners they imitate to a certain extent,—and almost always marry their mistresses if they have children. An old carpenter, nearly eighty years of age, came to me not long ago, and told me he was "going to marry his wife,"—that is, the woman he had been living with for fifty-three years. I saw the good old lady a day or two afterwards, and she seemed quite proud to be a bride!

In various parts of the city, but especially out-

side the barriers, are dancing-places and guinguettes, or goguettes, entirely frequented by the working classes. Here they enjoy themselves in their own way, often becoming very boisterous. When they dance, however—at least, so far as I have seen—they do so without the absurdity or the indecency of "their betters." On the other hand, the songs they delight in are full of coarse allusions; which it is natural to expect. The lyrics admired by well-educated persons are equally, perhaps more, immoral; but arrows pierce them that would fall blunted from the skin of a tough *ouvrier*. I should observe, that any one who ventures to visit the common places of resort of the workmen must arm himself with especial politeness. He will meet with nobody who does not expect to be called Monsieur or Madame. Don't shove a workman in the street, or expect him to stand out of the way, because you are well dressed. If you do, take the consequences. He is oppressed and annoyed by the Government, but is proud for all that. It is well to mention, that there is no limit to the price that a shopkeeper in France may charge for a broken window; and workmen are often thrown into prison for sheer accidents, being unable to make good the damage. The police seem to take a pride in vexing them. At present, no *ouvrier* can come from Lyons to Paris unless he can show that he has not only been engaged, but has

seven pounds sterling in his possession. A thousand little circumstances of this kind make this class exceedingly irritable. They are, like Samson chained in the temple, and we must not be surprised if they now and then attempt to shake down the whole edifice of society.

In Paris, as in every other great city, there exist large classes of persons who seem, at first sight, to be mere excrescences, but who, in the present disorganised state of society, are as necessary as sewers. M. Frégier labels them "dangerous," and describes them with some success. He includes, however, too many or too few in his catalogue; and his book is written in an unphilosophical spirit. The Chiffonniers, for example, numbering about six thousand, are only dangerous because they are poor; which is a common crime. These men go about with a basket on their backs, a lantern in one hand, and in the other a stick with a piece of iron at the end, the whole shaped like a 7. For this reason Fifine always called them Number Seven. They scrape about for bones, glass, and other articles which may be turned to account. Some of them actually pick up sufficient food to live on. Not long ago, an old woman was found who had been living for years in this way. Respect for human nature forbids a description of the state she was in. The poor wretch admitted that she used to eat even the poultices thrown out from the hos-

pitals. She was in a dying state, and was soon relieved.

There are no dust-bins in Paris. Every person is obliged, either after dark or before nine o'clock in the morning, to throw out the dirt of the day in a little heap before the door of the house. Then comes the Chiffonnier, and after him the dustman. Number Seven is an odd character. The class forms a refuge for extreme misery of all kinds. Not long ago a friend of mine, coming home late at night, asked a Chiffonnier what o'clock it was. The answer he received was a quotation from Horace. No doubt here was a student, brought to that pass by an exaggeration of the wild kind of life which all his fellows lead. In the Faubourg St. Antoine there is a Chiffonnier who industriously follows his calling by night, and in the daytime practises as a medical man. His patients are numerous, but poor; so that this is the least profitable half of his occupation. He studied formerly at the Hôtel Dieu—had the most expensive mistresses in Paris—ran through a fortune—and now lives amongst old bones, rags, and offal.

Generally speaking, the Chiffonnier crawls rather than walks about, intent and eager. If you speak to him, he answers uncivilly; and never raises the eyes, which he is darting hither and thither—often, it is said, rather in hope of a silver spoon or a purse

of gold, than of the legitimate objects of his industry. One piece of good luck often makes a man unhappy and anxious for ever, lest another should escape him. The other night, in a street in the Faubourg St. Germain, I saw a dark figure stealing along the wall, and stopping at each pile of dust before a gateway. It was dressed entirely in black, and walked so lightly that it must have worn only stockings. This was an Interloper—a grade below the regular chiffonniers, who are numbered, and would have attacked or denounced him to the police. He set down his bag, looking all the time up and down the street, scratched in the heaps of dirt, selected a few things, and went on rapidly, noiselessly, like a shadow.

But I cannot dig down through all these strata. It is sufficient to say, that beneath the workmen—who produce, amongst other things, all those wonderful pieces of art in the shape of furniture and ornaments which have made Paris famous—there is a very large mass of miserable and almost unclassed people, following strange and incomprehensible occupations, from whose ranks in times of civil disorder the sutlers and marauders—not the soldiers of an *émeute*—generally issue. It is amongst these that, under the name of Communism—falsely assumed—has spread a sort of doctrine, never yet reduced to writing, the ultimate object of which is not exactly spoliation—for this word implies plan—but a snatch

at the good things of others, a drunken bout, a surfeit, and after that the deluge. The doctrine—if so it can be called—sprang, no doubt, into existence in the brain of some dizzy, faded student, as reeling homewards he caught sight of a pile of gold absurdly displayed in a money-changer's window; or, perhaps it suggested itself simultaneously to many poor wretches greedy of enjoyments not reserved for them. Such notions are very unfortunate, both to those who entertain them and to society at large; because they entail the expense of three penal colonies on the coast of France, five hundred prisons, and I know not how many gendarmes. But to confound these hoarse ragamuffins with a great political party, as the French Reactionists did from design, and many Englishmen do from ignorance, is positively criminal.

The true theory of Communism, or, more properly, of the Commonwealth, considered as a basis for practice, has never yet been clearly stated. We have had Utopias of all kinds—some beautiful, others not; but the schools that have adopted them, all make the mistake of supposing that they are bound to transfer to this world an exact resemblance of the theory they have dreamed of. "Absurd and dangerous! There is a man who wants to have all things in common, or to divide all things equally;" cries the Public, which sees no difference between

these things: "shoot him down: he is a robber!" Stop, good Public! give him the Eastern privilege: for he is only benevolently insane. Do you not know that he will lose by division as well as you, and that he is the worshipper of an idea? Divide! Why, in six weeks the whole world would be mortgaged to usurers. But what set of men, sufficiently intellectual, and in sufficient numbers to be dangerous, ever thought of this nonsense? What necessity is there of proving the inequalities of our nature—the various degrees of intellect and of virtue? In France it has become the common saying, that the Partageux, or Dividers, were stupidly invented by Property in one of its fear-fits. The real living sect is that of the Communists—a knot of stern Epicureans, who lie upon hard boards, waiting for the day when the application of their system is to enable them to lie upon roses. We may safely say that, even under the form of Organisation of Labour, this school is never destined to guide the footsteps of the world.

But there exists another kind of Communism, as yet not well formulated, according to which every man who is born into society has, by the very fact of his existence, a claim on it—not for alms, but for guidance and comfort. The sectaries of this doctrine have for the cold theories of political economy, when it pretends to be anything else than the arithmetical

part of politics, an undisguised horror. Instead of regarding the State as a machine for producing the greatest amount of wealth possible with the least amount of population,—instead of calculating how Labour may be increased or diminished according to the principles of supply and demand,—it accepts every man that is born into this world as a brother with an immortal soul, and seeks to find or make a place for him. Among its chief economical tenets is this, that wealth is *one*—the joint product of the exertions of the whole country, of the magistrate and the public instructor as of the capitalist and the labourer,—that it is, properly speaking, the superfluity that remains after the necessities of all have been supplied. The practical deduction from this idea is, that taxation — intended to carry on the business of all — should take cognizance of this superfluity, and of it alone, in whatever vessels it may exist; and that the system we have hitherto applied to some extent, of paring off a little bit of each man's earnings, is absurd and iniquitous. In reality, however, a great deal of England's financial system is, and has been, obscurely based on the true conception of a Commonwealth. The Poor Laws, in all their variations of form, admit the claim of every man to a share of the common estate sufficient to support existence; but a higher, though more partial, applica-

tion of the same intuitively-felt doctrines, dictated the recent tax on the transmission of landed property. Another opportunity, however, must be taken of expressing these notions; and I hope to be able to do so in "Utopia."

CHAPTER XIV.

The Material of *Emeutes*—The Artistical Classes—Wide-spread Taste—Number of Artists—Their Opinions—How Reputations are Created—Prudhon—Introduction of Artistic Feeling into France — Its Transmission to the Bourgeoisie — Opinions of Painters—Atelier of M. Jeanron—His Pupils—The Reception-day—Approach of the *Coup d'état*—Atelier of Alexis—Master Jules—Borrowing Money—A Visit to Jules—His Workshop—Inscription on the Walls — M. Credeville — A Loquacious Model—Dunning an Artist—Basil—A Lazy Fellow—Waiting for Inspiration—The Loustic and the Rapin—Practical Jokes—Change in the Manners of Artists—Analogy from Military Life.

ALTHOUGH the better portion of the working classes forms the depository of democratic opinion in France, and supplies the material of *émeutes*, yet the most active and best known leaders are still, as in the old Revolution, found amongst the students and in the ranks of the liberal professions, medical men, lawyers, artists, and especially literary men, that is, political writers. This statement, which will be recognised as a truth by all persons acquainted with the subject, might give me the cue of several chapters; but I have no pretension to say everything, and begin, more-

over, "to see land." Already, sufficiently, perhaps, for my purpose, I have given a view of the state of manners, which in France imperatively calls for new and wise institutions, and at the same time exposes it to fall and to remain under despotism. I shall now say a few words of the Artists, among whom I was placed just previous to the *coup d'état*, as this will lead me to relate a few of my personal experiences at that extraordinary time.

One of the distinctive characteristics of the French nation is its love of Art. No one can deny that it possesses this in an eminent degree, though, from want of proper cultivation, the practical results are not commensurate with the strength of the passion—at least in the higher departments. The French woman, when she chooses the colours of her dress and arranges its graceful folds, is an artist—quite as much as the cook or the historical painter. The *ouvrier*, when he creates a table, a work-box, a vase, a watch, or a brooch, is pre-eminently an artist. Even the lad who displays shawls and muslins in a shop-window has the artistic feeling. It is not surprising, therefore, that the number of persons who apply themselves to drawing and painting and sculpture is immense. In Paris alone there are rather more than six thousand artists, in our sense of the word, of whom one-half are amateurs, and the other half gain, or endeavour to gain, a living by their profession.

Almost the whole of them have spent several years in the atelier or studio of a master, and have acquired a certain *esprit de corps* and a peculiar way of viewing things. The great majority are Republicans, more or less fanatical—though some of the most successful gentlemen now affect aristocratic ideas.

I have hinted that French love of Art, in as far as it has to do with patronage, is by no means enlightened. To prove this would take me into a special discussion and necessitate invidious remarks. I could give instances innumerable to prove that the small class of persons who buy pictures are directed in their choice more by accident than by science; and that the public willingly admires what it is told to admire. The history of the reputation of Prudhon, now so popular, is a case in point. During his lifetime he was only appreciated by a few friends, connoisseurs, but uninfluential; and it was only twenty years after his death that he began to be talked of. At present, pictures which would scarcely be sold at all in his life now fetch thousands of francs; and there is a disposition to overrate him. I know an instance in which an amateur, who spoke with contempt of a now well-known painter, was rebuked severely by a critic, and was possessed, six months afterwards, of pieces by that very hand to the value of eight hundred pounds. A more singular case of the same kind would require the mention of indi-

viduals now living; but perhaps this sort of thing is sufficiently common all the world over to enable the reader to understand what must be its manifestations where it exists in an excessive degree.

I compare the growth of a reputation, artistic or literary, in France, to the progress of the Giaour in "Vathek," who, after he has been kicked from the steps of the throne, rolls himself into a ball, and by some unaccountable attraction draws after him the deadly-eyed Prince, Carathis, the War Minister, the courtiers, the people—even the halt and the infirm. By some accident, one or two amateurs become convinced, with or without reason, that a man has genius, and begin running after him. Very soon the whole country is bewitched, and away it goes, like a pack of hounds after puss, until some other game crosses the track, when it turns aside and leaves the first victim of its enthusiasm astonished, and no doubt rather grieved, at its safety.

It was not till about the time of the Fronde that the young nobility of France, sent abroad by their families to travel out of the way of civil dissensions, acquired and brought home a real admiration for art. Some fifty gentlemen, with means and leisure at their disposal, began then to praise and buy pictures, and encourage genius to do its best. Their taste was, perhaps, never very refined. At any rate, it rapidly deteriorated. Yet, up to the Revolution,

there was a constant and, to a certain extent, enlightened patronage of art. A little previously, the wealthy bourgeoisie, more from imitation than any other cause, had begun to purchase pictures and try to understand their beauties. Probably, had things remained quiet, the education of their taste would have been successful; but time was not allowed them, and they were left heirs of a fashion instead of a science. They, as well as the people at large, had an instinctive veneration of Art—though more as a name than as a thing. It was their impression that Art was a great and beautiful manifestation of the mind, and they endeavoured with less success than might have been wished to appreciate its productions. France, therefore, possesses a wealthy middle class, really disposed to hail and reward the genuine artist; but without the power of recognising him when he appears. This accounts for so many sudden and ephemeral reputations. The bourgeoisie are conscientiously on the look-out for great men, and are easily deceived into supposing they have found them. Under such circumstances, we need not wonder that intrigue and quackery are almost necessary to whomsoever desires to succeed.

Among themselves the artists affect, above all things, to despise the bourgeois feeling and those who truckle to it. One of their number is excommunicated because he did not insult a grocer, who

exclaimed, "Your picture is a masterpiece; but I cannot buy it, for it is six inches too wide." Another is accused of selling for two hundred francs what he had previously asked a thousand for. In truth, however, all the really professional men are obliged to be tolerably condescending to the ignorance and indelicacy with which they have to deal, and revenge themselves when alone by pasquinade and satire.

The atelier of my friend M. Jeanron is, perhaps, the best reproduction of a workshop of one of the Old Masters that can be seen. It reproduces because it is no imitation, being governed by the frank originality of the presiding spirit. The walls are, as usual, hung with casts, sketches, and half-finished paintings, in rather odd disorder; the easels are dispersed in apparent confusion; and it requires some steadiness of nerve in a stranger to pick his way towards that tall, workman-looking man, who sits yonder hard at it, just looks up as you come in, and generally gives you his wrist to shake, both hands being better employed or daubed with paint. English amateurs—who have found him out, as they generally do contrive to find out true genius abroad—look sometimes amusingly aghast as they steer amidst chairs laden with palliets, basins of water, old shoes, turnips, or oyster-shells; for, besides being eminent as a scriptural painter and inimitable in marine landscapes,

M. Jeanron indulges occasionally in a bit of still life. Besides, there is André—the tall son, who looks astonished at finding himself a giant, and who draws and paints already like an old Fleming, making marvellous promise for the future; and then there is the jovial M. Jeanlisse, the immemorial pupil, ready to turn his hand to anything, seemingly for ever removing large easels or colossal canvasses, unhooking casts, pounding colours, inventing new mechanical assistances, and yet finding time not only to make most exquisite compositions of children at play, of Cupids in shady places, that remind us of Prudhon, but to model groups which he may, perhaps, never surpass in freshness, though he may in mere handling. However, I shall not praise these gentlemen, otherwise they may imagine I wish to soften them towards me because of some hard things I have been obliged to say of their country and the state of its manners.

I have spent most pleasant hours in this admirable atelier, talking of all matters, from theology to table-turning. On a Tuesday friends come in crowds, and change the room into a salon. That's the time to enjoy really intellectual conversation; but on such occasions I am afraid that Madame Jeanron interferes to destroy the picturesqueness of the scene. It is evident that a horrid duster has passed that way; the chairs are arranged with an amusing attempt at

symmetry, and seem to cast side-glances at each other in astonishment; and Jeanron himself has actually put aside the trowsers in which two men, even two men such as he, could stand, and the old jacket with its million stains; and appears in all the glories of a dress-suit and a white neckcloth! The lady has certainly much to answer for. Even André, wild, smuggler-looking fellow as he still is, seems pervaded by a sort of tint of gentility; and Jeanlisse keeps on his coat, even in hot weather. All the smart nonsense and all the profound philosophy circulated amongst the literary men, the patrons, the brother-artists, the friends of the family, at one weekly réunion—despite its somewhat bourgeois character—would make a pleasant chapter; but if I had space I would rather record one of those admirable discourses on the history of painting which, in quieter days, Jeanron used to pour out extempore as he finished off the button-hole of a coat,—for he paints portraits, too, and capitally. His "General Cavaignac" is admirable; and that wonderful old head of the banker, M. Odier, may rank with the best things of its kind.

However, I have not space for all these things. The subject of the state of Art, and the character and manners of Artists in France, would occupy too much space for me to venture on it now. I have hinted that, just previously to the *coup d'état*, almost un-

consciously, I had passed from the observation of Student Life, properly so called, to devote myself more to noticing the ways of artists. For this purpose, as I may say now—although, in reality, I had no settled plan—I installed myself in the atelier of my friend Alexis, and began to take lessons in drawing. My progress was by no means marvellous, for Alexis was in one of his idle moods, being more occupied with a certain Mademoiselle Euphémie than with his Art. To be sure, Art had been a bad friend to him; and he was reduced to live by lithographing those sentimental young ladies and elegant youths, to be met with only on the frontispieces of musical publications. We used the atelier as a place of rendezvous, and consumed therein a vast amount of tobacco and red wine, even by day. In the evening there was often a game of rhams; and a demoniacal smoking-match, carried on until it was absolutely impossible to see one another across the table.

One of the worthies most constantly in attendance on these occasions was Master Jules, whom I have already mentioned as a member of the Club sans Gêne. I had not seen him for some time, as he had borrowed fifteen francs of me in more jovial days, and seemed to have made it a principle to relieve his friends of his society as soon as he was indebted to them. I once met him in the street. He tried to disappear behind a gendarme; but, small as

he was, I descried and hailed him; upon which he ran up, asked me if I was in want of money, and promised, if I called any day that week, he would not only pay what he owed but lend me more. I said I would call, and accordingly went in a day or two to the new address which he had given; feeling, however, very doubtful whether that was his real dwelling. The porter relieved my mind, to a certain extent, by telling me to ascend to the sixth story. When I reached it, I saw "JULES" written on the door in large chalk letters, with a request to "ring the bell." This, however, was a sneer, as there was no such thing. I knocked several times, and was about to retire, when suddenly the door opened, and a young girl shabbily dressed appeared, and requested me to walk in. I complied, remembering some confidential information received formerly about a beautiful duchess. The room was large, and supplied with a cabinet that contained the bed. About the walls were plaster casts, skulls, and cross-bones, the accoutrements of a National Guard, some pieces of old armour, duelling-pistols, foils, masks, and a variety of inscriptions: one of which informed the public that Monsieur So-and-So was a hog; and another was composed of the famous words, "*Credeville, voleur,*" originally written on the walls of Paris by some Rapin, copied everywhere — not only in France, but in all Europe—and reproduced on the

Great Pyramid; whilst all the time nobody knew who was the individual thus stigmatised! When first this mysterious inscription appeared, and began to be repeated everywhere, the government of Louis Philippe was thrown into great alarm, imagining it to be the signal of an approaching insurrection. No one, however, has been able, from that time to this, to explain the matter; and posterity must remain in doubt both as to the moral character of M. Credeville and even as to his very existence.

The young girl, though she had a tendencyto snuffle, and seemed by no means clean, was agreeable enough to look at from a distance; and as she sometimes reclined on a divan—sometimes bustled about, disarranging rather than arranging the furniture—I did not doubt the nature of her relations with Jules. At length, seeing that I made no advances to a conversation, she began to talk in a sadly jumbled way, and undeceived me to a certain extent. She said that she was a Model, and wanted a pair of stays and new shoes—that she liked fine dresses—that Jules had employed her, and owed her for three sittings—that she had come an hour before, and had been promised payment if she would return —that, of course, she had returned, and supposed the artist was in search of cash. "You young men," she proceeded, "are always obliged to draw the devil by the hair. I'll engage you have never paid for that

paletot of yours." I told her that she was mistaken, upon which there was a visible change in her manner. It was clear I was no artist; and she, who looked upon herself as one, and partook in all the ideas of the craft, felt ashamed at having spoken of domestic matters to a stranger—one not of the family. Perhaps I might be a capitalist, come to order a picture! She looked desperately annoyed, and made some awkward attempts to "rehabilitate" Jules, saying that she was not there to dun him—that he always paid very handsomely and regularly, though he was behindhand for once; and so on. A loud laugh interrupted her, and Jules himself made his appearance, not through the doorway, but from behind a cloak hung up in the corner of the room, where he had hid on hearing the approach of his creditor. After a little while he got rid of her, and then confidentially informed me that, so far from being able to repay what he owed, he should like to find a friend who would lend him more. As he immediately afterwards let out that he spent most of his time at the café of the Rue de Bussy, or Bucy, I did not regret being unable to comply with his request.

Another character whom I used to meet at Alexis's atelier was a heavy-looking fellow, whom they called Basil. Many young French painters affect an originality in their manner which they have not in their mind. Would-be men of genius are

nearly always lazy. They think this one of the most valuable privileges of their character. My friend Basil belonged to this class; except, perhaps, that he had more talent than the world gave him credit for. He lost himself by yielding, to a most ridiculous extent, to that absurd habit of some intellectual men, of "waiting for inspiration." They wait for inspiration sometimes all their lives, and it never comes. The real way is to go and fetch it. Basil did not choose to do so. On one occasion a friend procured him, partly out of charity, an order from the wife of a wealthy banker for a kind of thing in which he excelled—a couple of bouquets in water-colours. The money was paid in advance three years ago, and the bouquets are not yet in bloom. He does not intend to defraud her, but "he wants to produce something excellent." He is waiting for inspiration. His friends tell him that this seems dishonest. He colours, bites his lip, and says, "I will set about it," in a deplorably desponding tone; but he has not put pencil to paper yet. He has no studio of his own, but goes now to one friend's place, now to the other,—sometimes with, sometimes without material; but upon almost every occasion he thrusts his hands into his shock of hair, and sits down complaining that he has no ideas, no inspiration. As may be imagined, he is often in want of a dinner, and is compelled to sponge upon a friend.

He went to one the other day, and in his heavy, lumbering way, said, "I have got no money, and yet I must eat." His friend replied, "I have only three francs; you can dine for one—take it. I am going to spend the evening with some friends, and must have a little extra." "Yes," growled Basil, "you are going to amuse yourself. What shall I do? How shall I spend my evening? I *must* go to the café—let me have ten sous more." His friend pitied his miserable look, and gave him the ten sous; but his brother-artists now begin to quote him as an example to avoid. They say that his laziness has, at length, so completely got the upper hand of him, that he is beginning to lose even a sense of honour. He ceases to pay his debts when he has got money—totally against artist law. They range him, therefore, among the Bohemians. He has lately fastened himself upon a good-natured painter, who has a large atelier. He sleeps in one corner, wrapped up in a cloak, and pretends to work by day. Sometimes a spark comes forth from this inert mass, and he dashes off a brilliant piece of colouring, which is sure to find an amateur. He has never had patience to learn to draw, but his instinctive appreciation of colour causes his criticism to be sought for and appreciated by his friends. "Put a rocket in there—a streak here—hang the light in this place,"—such is the kind of language in which he affects to express

himself. But his observations are generally correct. The other day, pitying his destitute condition, a friend wished to introduce him to a lady, who offered to pay him ten francs a-lesson for teaching her water-colours. But he said that he would not work like a cab, at so much the hour. Then they procured him an order from a country seigneur to decorate his castle. The idea seemed to please him. But he asked five days for deliberation. During these five days he disappeared. Nobody knew what had become of him. But at length he entered his friend's atelier and said, "I have been down to that place. 'Tis full of people. I shall not work there. They would bother me. Thank you all the same. I am not like a quack dentist, who draws teeth before the crowd." Basil will die in a hospital.

Artists must be divided into several classes. I mean the young artists in the studios. Two of the most amusing are the Loustic and the Rapin. The Loustic is generally an artist amateur, that is to say, his parents have property; they see him some day, when a child, take a piece of chalk, or charcoal, and scratch the portrait of his father or his school-master. This is enough. It is at once determined that a great genius has revealed itself. The lad no sooner escapes from college than he is sent to a painter's studio. He is supplied with a handsome sum of money, and becomes very often the loustic

of the atelier; perhaps the most backward in the serious part of his art, but clever as a caricaturist, and allowed to take any liberties as a practical joker.

The Rapin is the servant of the atelier—something equivalent to a fag at a public school. A shabby dress is an essential part of his definition. Most probably he has an immense bush of hair. He often becomes a clever artist, but no one knows how. His duties are to do all the work of the atelier, to run of errands, to set the model, &c. He often picks up a good deal of knowledge from the conversation of the students, and ripens in a mysterious manner. Some of the best French artists have been rapins in their time, and are proud to own it. I notice that those who display most talent are not the perfumed, finikin gentlemen, acceptable at a court; but those who have something of the *ouvrier* about them—a sort of roughness which only sets off their finer qualities. Jacques, one of the best engravers that France possesses, is an excellent specimen of a true artist.

The practical jokes of an atelier are sometimes carried a good deal too far. It is the custom for every fresh student to pay his "footing," as it is called. A rich new-comer once refused to comply with this formality. The students bided their time, and, when the master was away, seized upon the unfortunate recalcitrant, strapped him naked to a ladder, exposed

him in the court-yard in the sun for half an hour, then covered him with a cloth and carried him all the way from the Rue de Sèvres to the Pont Neuf, where they allowed him to wrap himself in the cloth, get into a cab, and return home. When the female models happen to be lively, rather extraordinary scenes sometimes take place. Wine is sent for, and the wine-dealer, instead of being paid, is made to dance an infernal hornpipe with a Bacchante-like model, and to get drunk on his own liquor. Many poor artists, having acquired ideas amidst such scenes, gain their living somewhat disgracefully by illustrating the libertine life of Paris; and the shops are full of these productions, which must have their influence on morals. The scene is generally laid in Carnival time.

There has been a marked change of late years in the character of the great French artists. Formerly their distinctive characteristics were a rough originality of character,—sometimes natural, sometimes affected; carelessness in costume, improvidence, and generosity. The anecdotes related of them remind us of the brutal independence of Abernethy. "*Ils envoyaient promener volontiers ceux qui les embetaient.*" Now things have changed, but it is doubtful if for the better. With some few exceptions, the great artists have become time-servers—men of the world, genteelly dressed, with finikin

manners; but hollow, wanting in sincerity, in passion for their art, and in *esprit de corps*. They are becoming like those English painters who shut up their studios for fear their friends should steal their ideas; just as some manufacturers of Manchester or Lyons object to allowing foreigners to go over their works.

These remarks about modern painters being made in the presence of a military man, son of a General of the old Republic, he observed that the same change, or degeneracy, had taken place in the army. The old *entrain*, love of glory, enthusiasm, fondness for the smell of powder, have disappeared. The soldier is no longer pre-eminently a fighting animal, but an *employé*, bent on gaining his salary with as little trouble as possible. The heads of the military profession—the Vaillants, the Changarniers, the Cavaignacs, the Lamoricières, are ignorant of this state of things; and, being moved by a sort of historical enthusiasm, believe that the old cry of "Glory! glory! glory!" would suffice. "This," said he, "is a mistake. The old poetical courage has disappeared, to make way for a kind of ferocity. The soldier is angry against whoever forces him to fight—as angry against his chiefs as against the enemy. This explains why he massacres after victory—to revenge the fear he has himself experienced. His degeneracy began under Louis Philippe, when corruption over-

took everybody; and thus is explained, in part, the inefficiency of the army in 1848. In June of that year especially—whoever was present at the Ministry of War must know that aide-de-camp after aide-de-camp arrived, saying, *Les troupes ne donnent pas. Ils n'y a que la Garde Mobile qui donne.* In December, 1851, the troops massacred with rage at being obliged to expose their lives; and it is well known that a whole regiment retreated in disorder three times from a barricade defended by thirty men. The same cause explains the cruelties of the African wars. If war ever take place the troops will fight methodically, because it is their profession; but it will be some time before the heroic feeling gets up. The only war that would really be popular would be a descent upon England, because there is an impression that we are defenceless, and that there would be an immense booty to get." These views are, perhaps, a little exaggerated; but they seem tolerably well based on facts. At any rate, they are not mere satire, but the serious conviction of a very calm thinker. He particularly insisted on the tendency of the officers to become mere *employés*, expecting advancement from seniority, and calculating their receipts just like the clerks in government offices.

CHAPTER XV.

WHAT I SAW OF THE COUP D'ÉTAT.

THE reader has now some idea of the kind of public amidst which I happened to be when, towards the close of 1851, the atmosphere of Paris began once more to be charged with the electric fluid of Revolution. Every one was excited, though few could explain to themselves why. There was, moreover, an unusual element in the excitement, which many people scarcely understood. The sentiment of fear now, perhaps, for the first time, mingled with the anticipation of a struggle. On other occasions, no sooner did the idea of strife present itself, however indistinctly, than the whole Parisian population seemed pervaded by the martial spirit. The strange fascination of the battle-field lured them on. Even lads and women opened wide their nostrils to snuff the smell of gunpowder. Fifine helped to make cartouches, and Honorine sang of *Charlotte la Républicaine.* There was nothing of all this to be noticed during the month of November, 1851.

Everybody shook their heads, and talked of something mysterious that was going to happen; but they did so in the helpless tone of a desert-traveller, who feels the first breath of the simoom, and knows that his part is to wrap his head in his cloak and wait until the hot tempest has blown by. I have heard this terrible impression quoted as a proof of the wonderful genius of him who created it; but Genius implies a certain amount of heart and soul, and never operates with the blind fury of the elements which hurry man to destruction, and stifle the cries of anguish which he sends up to a Superior Power.

I had spent the evening with Alexis and some other friends, talking over the political and social prospects of France. The various false alarms that had disturbed us for several months, had rather restored our confidence than increased our anxiety. We began for a moment to hope for the best. The tone of our dialogue, accordingly, had been anything but gloomy. We all foresaw a period of struggle, more or less prolonged; but by the force of circumstances—by the influence of partialities for persons and for doctrines, we had all quitted the vantage-ground of indifferent observation, and had been led to enter upon one of those sunken roads by which we sometimes proceed toward the future without being able to distinguish what obstacles are ahead,

what ambushes are preparing on either hand. Frankly, we were all Republicans; that is to say, believers in the capacity of every man to judge best of his own interests and his own wants; and foolishly faithful in the average honesty of the human species.

What were the topics of our discussion it would be too long to develope. We knew what dangers threatened the institutions that had recently been established in France. I remember being called upon to explain how it happened, that what is called the respectable portion of the press in England had united, for three whole years, not to criticise in a friendly spirit, but to libel, with bitterness and anger, all acts that proceeded from the Republican party; and especially why it was that nearly every daily paper, by flattery, by false colouring, by direct or indirect praises, by extravagant gratitude for wise actions, and lenient interpretations of such as were admitted to be wrong; above all, by insidious prophecies; was encouraging the elected President of the French Republic, who had sworn to restore intact the deposit confided to him, to place himself above the laws and above faith, in order to procure for Europe that repose which was believed to be necessary, and which it was thought could not be compassed by any other means. I had little to say in reply. The facts were indisputable; and as I could

not bring myself to admit what I have since become convinced was true—namely, that from the year 1848 to the year 1851 there was a decided reaction in favour of arbitrary government in England, which would have been capable, had our institutions been less happily organised, of encouraging a return to a disgraceful period of history, I was obliged to maintain that the line of policy adopted by the English press arose entirely from ignorance, not of the main facts of history, nor of the ordinary rules of politics, but of the peculiar circumstances of French civilisation, and of French manners and character. Although my observation was correct as far as it went, this was but a lame defence, and provoked the retort,—"If the English writers know nothing of the peculiar circumstances of our condition, why do they not argue for us as they would for themselves? Why do they persist, for example, in becoming the accomplices of an imperial conspiracy by giving, on every possible occasion, the title of Prince to our President—they who are so ticklish about titles, that they will not allow a letter to be addressed to a Bishop of Westminster nominated by a foreign power?" I was obliged upon this to say, that owing, in some measure, to the errors and absurdities of the democratic party in France, but, in a greater degree, to fear of the progress of a democratic party in England, our political writers,

without much calculation of consequences, were led day by day to praise everything in France that seemed to promise a defeat to the Republican party, looked upon as the common enemy of Authority.

At this point of our discussion Agricole came in, somewhat agitated, with an evening paper in his hand. It was the "Avénement du Peuple," edited by the family of the Hugos and a small society of able young men. Its name had previously been the "Evénement," but under that title it had been crushed by heavy condemnations. Several of its editors—five or six, I believe—were in prison. Our young friend pointed out to us a paragraph, which stated that there was a report in circulation, that on that night or the next day there was to be a *coup d'état* simultaneously at Paris and at Lyons. "Some members of the Republican party," said the journal, "are nervous enough to take notice of these reports;" and then it went on to show, perhaps ironically, how utterly impossible it was that Louis Napoleon should thus flagrantly betray the faith which he had pledged. These commentaries agreed so far with our own opinions, and we had been so often alarmed by the cry of "wolf" before, that we all set about calming the excitement of Agricole, declaring that, although it was possible that such criminal designs were harboured, it was, on the other hand, still more probable that any flagitious

attempt of the kind would be prevented by fear of a tremendous outburst of public indignation. We separated in a state of mind in which uneasiness and confidence were curiously blended.

This was on the evening of the 1st of December, 1851; so that, as we were wending our way homeward, a man, not many years before described in a police document as "one metre seventy-eight centimetres in height, with hair and eyebrows of light chestnut, ordinary forehead, grey eyes, large nose, middling mouth, round chin, and oval face;" whom we knew to exceed most persons in knowledge of London life; who had, until recently, been looked upon as an enthusiastic adventurer; who had suddenly been chosen as its representative by a nation that knew not its own wants, and immediately afterwards elected a hostile Assembly; who had dallied with all parties, made promises on every side, but who had discovered the great political secret, that there being no such thing as truth, an oath is a mere bait, a wriggling worm on a hook;—whilst, I say, we strolled severally towards our homes, this man, bravely making use of the only instruments he could find, and regretting that their morality was such that even France must twit them, was preparing to make himself master—absolute, uncontrolled master—of one of the finest countries in the world, with all the people, crops, forests, that thereon do grow. The

prize was worth struggling for. All mean compunctions were set aside; and Louis Napoleon must have indeed felt that he was a great man, if he really foresaw that, within a day or two, thirty-five millions of men—with some few imprudent exceptions—would grovel before him and admit his right to dispose absolutely of their lives, their property, and their honour. It is useless to stigmatise such a man with the name of Tyrant. He is not a tyrant; he is France—France incarnated. All the rest is mere semblance. Such were not my thoughts as I went to sleep that night; for I had been so long mixed up with a particular class of ardent believers in liberty, that it seemed to me impossible that an usurpation could succeed.

Next morning I was up rather late, and yet waited unreasonably long for my breakfast. When it came, I was told that a baker had delayed bringing the bread on account of the *émeutes*. Similar reasons had been so often given before, that I omitted to ask for an explanation, and shortly afterwards went down into the streets: it was ten o'clock, and, to my surprise, they were almost empty. A few people were walking very rapidly in various directions, not in twos or threes, but one by one. They seemed to avoid each other. All were pale and anxious. The word *émeute* came to my mind; but this, thought I, is not the usual physiognomy of Paris in a time of

insurrection. When the people fly to arms, the streets are generally filled with eager and excited groups, crowding round some orator who undertakes to read aloud and comment on an article in a newspaper. It seems rather as if some great catastrophe, some national disaster, had come to pass, or as if some frightful pestilence had declared itself during the night. The only other comparison that suggested itself, was that of a South American town in the old buccaneering times, when Captain Morgan was reported in the offing. The sentiment that crept into my mind, reflected, as it were, from the faces that hurried by, was one of fear. I could not understand the prostration that came over me. On reaching the corner of the Rue de Lille, I saw a man reading a proclamation on white paper pasted on the wall, and yet damp from the brush. I went towards him, and he slunk away immediately, and left the place clear for me. A single glance explained the whole mystery. Louis Napoleon had dissolved the National Assembly, and declared himself Dictator. Another person was coming along the pavement, and instinctively I made way for him, and went towards my house, understanding, for the first time, what was meant by a Reign of Terror.

It was evident at once, by the tone partly of the proclamation, but still more from the manner in which it had been received, what was to be the

principle of the new order of things if it contrived to last. Throwing aside all ideas of right, by the very manner of its appearance it could only exist by naked violence, by appealing to the meanest sentiments of our nature—the love of life, merely for the sake of life and of the material enjoyments it allows; the fear of death, as the only evil which we are bound to shun. All the proclamations which covered the walls that day and the following ones combined to produce this state of mind. The object of the Dictator was to stifle at once the opposition that might arise from what virtue and enthusiasm was still left in France. We all know that time is required to work up a people to the defence of its rights, of its dignity, or even of its prejudices. It was resolved that this time should not be given. The slightest attempt at discussion was to be punished at once. "Kill! kill! kill!" this was the panacea adopted. It had its effect. And the impression of abject fear produced on the minds of the vast majority of that gallant nation of France was so great, that it has not yet disappeared. I know individuals who still continue physically to tremble from the horror produced at that time.

A hand touched me on the shoulder. I turned round with a start. It was Alexis. "Come home *after* me," said he. The word *after* was expressive. It meant, that if we walked together we might be

taken for conspirators. I followed him at a little distance, and in a turn or two reached the door of his house. A lad of seventeen came running out, with sparkling eyes and face flushed with excitement. "Where are you going?" said Alexis. "To fetch my gun," he cried. He was too young as yet to feel the craven feeling which was creeping over the whole mind of France. "Come in," muttered we; "let us talk." Our solemn faces chilled his enthusiasm, and we went up together into the atelier, which we found had been chosen as a rendezvous by several young men; most of those who had spent the evening with us, and several others. The artists were all sitting before easels, pretending to draw or to paint. The others, two law-students and a dramatic writer, formed a group round the stove. Alexis looked rather uneasy at this assemblage, and muttered something against his porter for having given the key in his absence. The idea of self-preservation, so fatal to energetic resolutions, had forced itself even into his mind. However, by the mysterious effect of contact, the whole of our little party soon resumed its Republican attitude. One was placed at the door to listen if any one came up-stairs, whilst the others discussed the events of the night, as yet imperfectly known. From time to time one or two went down into the street to gather the rumours that were flying about. I shall never forget that

meeting. We were eight or ten of us. The room was but half-lighted, partly because the weather was dismal, partly because the curtains were purposely let down. The details of the discussion, however, are not so completely fixed on my memory, because the principal incident is too strongly impressed. About an hour after our assembling, several of the young men were employed in melting balls from a piece of lead, which had been hidden ever since the days of June behind an old chest of drawers. There was no longer any conversation, but one of the party, sometimes sitting, sometimes half-rising, with his hands outstretched and turned down, as if to allay the sound of the voices, was singing the "Marseillaise" in an under-tone. When they came to the chorus, there was now and then a dangerous burst upon the words "*Aux armes!*" after which the rest was rather hissed and muttered than sung. The light of a little earthenware furnace, over which they were melting the lead in a soup-ladle, glared upon the pale faces of the conspirators.

Suddenly, a rapid step was heard on the staircase. The materials of war were hidden with almost undignified hurry. The painters rushed to their easels, and the others began to load their pipes with pallid indifference. Some one knocked, and a well-known voice asked for admission. A tall, elegant young man, came in, with his hands thrust deep

into the pockets of his paletot. He seemed as if he wanted to get rid of them altogether. "It is all up," said he, when the door was closed. "*Les ouvriers ne donnent pas*" — (The workmen don't give, or act). He then showed us his hands, covered with dirt and blood. He had been employed with some few others in going from place to place beginning barricades, tearing up the paving-stones with his hands, and expecting that, as of old, the workmen, once the example set, would come out to complete and man them. They had not done so; for they, likewise, were frightened.

This news seemed to freeze, as well it might, the souls of my companions, and another incident that now occurred put an end for the time to all ideas of resistance. The heavy tramp of cavalry was heard in the streets, and one of us, venturing to look out, saw a patrol of some ten or twelve horse come up and halt exactly in front of the house. The idea of treachery at once suggested itself. It was thought that we were about to be arrested, and, perhaps, shot at once. This, however, was a false alarm. It suggested the following observation from one of the law-students:— "Gentlemen, it has been calculated that every fifth man in France is a spy. We are ten of us here. There are two spies amongst us. Let us separate."

In a few minutes I and Alexis were left alone. We tried to forget what was passing, and began to

draw. Shortly afterwards there was a great murmur in the streets; and, looking out, we saw for the first time that day a crowd, all moving rapidly in one direction. Alexis immediately exclaimed: "The storm is rising. We were too quickly frightened." Obeying an irresistible impulse, we ran down bare-headed and joined the crowd, which carried us up the Rue des Saints Pères, towards the Mairie of the Tenth Arrondissement. It thickened as we went on, and slackened in its motions, beginning to collect into a dense mass. I caught a glimpse, however, of a number of gentlemen, with red scarfs across their shoulders, moving in rather a disorderly manner towards the Mairie. Their passage continued some time, and then the gates were shut. We did not communicate with any one. No one seemed to like to speak to his neighbour. However, by various exclamations as well as by our knowledge of what was likely to take place, we understood that a large proportion of the National Assembly, after having been beaten and insulted and spit upon by the drunken soldiery in endeavouring to gain admission into their usual place of meeting, had adjourned thither, in the hope of converting the Mairie into a new Salle du Jeu de Paume. From what now took place, I understood how far the usurpation was supported by other means than terror. The whole crowd was composed evidently of Republicans, who

did not scruple to talk, after they had been a little time collected together, of perjury and tyranny; and yet they were not assembled there from any sympathy with those inside. On the contrary, instead of working up their minds to opposition, they seemed to accept what had taken place as a decree of destiny, and to derive great consolation under their misfortune from the fact that the rabble of sham politicians, who smarted most severely in their vanity from what had taken place, but who had brought it about by their wretched intrigues and want of common foresight, had collected there to compromise their dignity by a ridiculous semblance of resistance. During the deliberation that went on inside, a rather comical incident occurred. The Marquis de la Rochejaquelin rolled his burly form through the crowd, saying: "Be quiet, my children. All is right; this won't last twenty-four hours." At length a little window on the first-floor opened, and a man with a large face and lofty forehead made his appearance, and motioned for silence. He was immediately recognised as Berryer, the great orator of the Legitimist party. The people accordingly began to shout "*Vive la République!*" refusing at first to listen to him; for every one knew that he was one of the arch-conspirators against the Constitution which he had been elected to defend, and which he now only wished to defend because it had been violated by

another than himself. At last, however, he was allowed to make himself heard, and it was really a pleasure to hear this great sophist, after trying to dazzle the assemblage by a few fine phrases, compelled by the significant observations cast up to him by lads and women in the crowd—compelled, in order to secure a little attention—to say emphatically that he appeared there to speak in the name of Universal Suffrage, which he had laboured to destroy, and of the Republic which he had conspired to overthrow. A shout, half of irony, half of applause, greeted this declaration, and then the orator went on to pronounce the downfall of the Usurper, and to tell the people that the National Assembly, collected there in sufficient numbers for deliberation, had appointed a Commander-in-Chief for all the troops in and about Paris. There was a movement of curiosity. Some expected the name of Cavaignac; but Berryer turned pompously round, and pointing to a fussy-looking little gentleman by his side, named General Oudinot. There was a shout of laughter, and from all sides flew up the single word, "Rome! Rome!" The great Party of Order worthily closed its career by this ridiculous nomination, which proved them to be absolutely, miserably ignorant of the state of public feeling. At this moment the room from which Berryer had spoken was filled with chasseurs, who had obtained admission, I know not

how, so intensely had I been listening. The orator and the general were dragged back, and bayonets appeared in their place. I now perceived that the crowd had considerably diminished, and was rapidly flowing off in various directions. Our enthusiasm had also again subsided; and Alexis, noticing that we were both bare-headed, whispered to me to stroll away, which I did.

On returning to my lodgings, I found some rather unexpected visitors—Fifine and Agricole. From them I learned that matters were looking very serious towards the Carrefour de Bussy, where an attempt at a barricade had been made. People were running about like birds before a storm. Fifine was a thorough Republican, of course; and had distinguished herself in the days of June, at some risk to herself, by scraping lint for the insurgents as well as for the Party of Order. On the present occasion she was in a state of great excitement, partly from indignation, directed a good deal against the men, the Beard Wearers, who allowed themselves to be disposed of in this summary manner; partly from fear lest Agricole might come to mischief. He had been polishing up his pistols; but I could easily see that he was not very warlike at that precise moment. Like most of his class, he had been demoralised by a succession of useless struggles; and observed, very properly, that it was

scarcely worth while to overthrow one government if the country had not talent and honesty enough to stand by another. I soon learned that, as there might be some warm work in the direction where they lived, the loving couple had determined to come to my quiet quarters, and spend the night, if necessary, in playing whist or piquet, or moaning over the fate of France.

I do not intend to give even the outline of the extraordinary scene in history which was then taking place; but simply to note what I observed of the changes of public feeling. There were several reports of the erection of barricades during the first day; for although, as I have said, the greater portion of the population were stupified and overwhelmed with fear, there were found in the ranks of the middle and educated classes some men sufficiently virtuous and generous to sacrifice their lives —although they must have felt that it was in vain— in order that so great a violation of law and justice might not pass without an armed protest. It is, perhaps, needless to insist on the fact, that the *émeute* during these fatal days of December was begun by the Government against the Constitution, freely established by an Assembly, which had emanated from universal suffrage, which had gained a great victory over insurrection, and was supported by a popular general, the whole of the army, and the

National Guard. I shall merely notice, to deplore it, the fact that the English Ambassador then in Paris, Lord Normanby, since deservedly removed from the political scene, ignoring all these facts, actually wrote, whilst the streets of Paris were yet streaming with blood, to congratulate the Dictator on what he called his "victory over the Reds:" thus wilfully throwing a stigma (for the word *red* is understood as such in England) upon the only men who still retained any active virtue in France. If this communication was not a mere act of diplomatic servility, the person who wrote it, and the party that applauded it in England, would be perfectly ready with their shouts for Mr. Disraeli, for example, should he put himself at the head of the Horse Guards, clear out both Houses of Parliament, and thrust the Queen into Hanwell! The fact that this supposition is absurd, renders the reception of the *coup d'état* by some Englishmen still more criminal. We are quite sure of our own liberty—why should we not applaud the destruction of the liberty of our neighbours? The French are fond of accusing us of Machiavellism; and when they read the articles translated from the English papers in favour of the *coup d'état*—none other were allowed to be published—they began to say that the English were delighted at their abasement, for the same reason that a merchant might be delighted at the

bankruptcy of a rival house. They were mistaken. The admiration of a small sect of statesmen and a small political party in England for the acts of Louis Napoleon arose only from that stupid veneration of power and success, which is the province of human nature upon which tyranny always makes its first attacks.

Towards evening, Paris somewhat recovered the elasticity of its mind. The attempts at resistance had been partial and unsuccessful. The troops had marched, or rather reeled, from one end of the city to the other, and had found no enemy. The people, hearing no roar of cannon, no roll of musketry, began to venture out of their houses, and make for the Boulevards. I went with a small party—Fifine, Agricole, Alexis, and Basil—in that direction. The entrance to the Carrousel was stopped up by lines of soldiers. Artillery occupied the Place. We walked round by St. Germain l'Auxerrois to the Palais Royal. The court was filled with soldiers, bivouacking in the open air. They had lighted great fires, round which they crowded, engaged in cooking their supper. Everything showed that Paris was in the hands of a Prætorian insurrection. There was a constant stream of people flowing towards the Boulevards. When we reached them, they were absolutely crammed from side to side. No vehicles were in motion. A great proportion of the crowd

were collected in dense serried groups. We went from one to the other, and generally found a couple of men engaged in discussing the great event, whilst the others listened eagerly. I was surprised to find here no trace of the abject fear of the morning. The people seemed to have rubbed their eyes, and awakened as from a dream. They could scarcely believe the possibility of what had happened. The words, "perjurer," "usurper," "tyrant," were bandied about, as freely as if there were nothing to dread. The uppermost feeling, however, seemed not to be anger, but contempt. There were more jokes than menaces. The general impression was, that it was impossible so violent an act could be tolerated for more than twenty-four hours; and that as soon as France had time to collect its ideas, it would shake off so stupid an usurpation with the utmost ease. Two or three, perhaps a dozen individuals, in the vast crowd through which we passed, from the Rue Vivienne to the Porte Saint Martin, ventured to raise their voices in favour of the *coup d'état*. They were instantly silenced—some by laughter and jeers, others by the more expeditious method which is technically called, I believe, "bonneting." One individual had the skirt of his coat torn off, and ran away, whilst a *gamin* followed at his heels, offering to restore it. At the Café Tortoni a white-bearded

gentleman tried to make a speech, recommending, with great moderation, that Louis Napoleon should be allowed time to explain his intentions. A crowd of some five or six hundred people, mostly in black coats, roared him down; and he was fain to escape into the interior of the café, pursued by the epithets of "*Rat-apoil,*" "*Casse-majou,*" which were the nick-names that had previously been applied to the Bonapartists. The same cry was kept up all along the Boulevards whenever any insinuation was attempted in favour of the *coup d'état.* Just as we reached the Porte Saint Denis we saw, on the top of the slope behind us, a mass of sparkling objects, and a dense and regular crowd. A column of infantry was marching down, amidst a perfect hurricane of exclamations on either hand. We could not, at first, distinguish what was said, but the cry came on with the column; and when its head was opposite to us, every voice around, without exception, was shouting, "*A bas le tyran! à bas le parjure!*" The crowd pressed up so close upon the soldiers that at one time they were obliged to halt and present bayonets, to avoid being trampled down. Had the people broken in upon the ranks at that moment, affairs would have taken a very different turn; but the officer in command prudently extricated his men from their position, and marched up the Rue du Faubourg Saint Denis.

It was the experience of that evening that con-

vinced the new Government that, although threatening words and vigorous political acts might strike terror for a time into all, and permanently silence some, yet that, in order to demoralise the nation completely, it was necessary that blood should be shed, in a sufficiently public and unscrupulous manner to produce the impression that they were determined to shrink from nothing. Then was formed the scheme of that bloody massacre by which, on the next day but one, Paris was frightened into a submission, from which it has not yet escaped. The details of this horrible scene have been so often given, that I shall not here reproduce them. They are known by every one, or should be known. I make this proviso, because I meet some people who still affect to disbelieve in the fact of a massacre, and who pretend that the whole affair was an ordinary *émeute*. To convince these sceptics is, perhaps, impossible. However, the official returns of the killed on the army side are eloquent. They state that only twenty-four soldiers and one officer lost their lives; whilst the lowest estimate of the loss on the side of the supposed insurgents is a thousand. In all other cases, when the people have fought behind barricades, their loss has been less than that of the troops.

I think it right to mention one or two curious circumstances connected with this tragical event. A

...mn of infantry and cavalry, several thousand in ...mber, was passing through the street in which I ...ved. A single man, half-intoxicated, came out of a cabaret, and cried, "*Vive la République!*" which expression, by the way, headed every proclamation of the Government, and yet was esteemed a seditious cry. A soldier seized the man by the collar, and dragged him along. An officer on horseback soon afterwards rode up, and said, "What the devil do we want with prisoners? Shoot him at once!" The man was accordingly taken into the Rue Jacob and shot; and before the roll of the wheels of the artillery that followed the column had died away in the direction of the Rue Taranne, the body had disappeared, and a neighbouring butcher had strewed sawdust over the pool of blood left behind. The Government accounts of the transaction state, that the victory which gave Lord Normanby so much pleasure was completely gained by four o'clock in the afternoon. If this be the case, how does it happen that, from eight o'clock in the evening until eleven, I stood at my window, and heard constantly platoon firing in various directions—at the Carrousel and towards the Champs de Mars? The people say —but I have never yet been able to ascertain the exact truth—that these sounds indicated the execution of the prisoners, who were brought down by hundreds to the two places I have mentioned,

When I passed through the Carrousel next [illegible] there was an immense space, about a hundred f[illegible] across, covered thick with ashes and cinders, whic[illegible] everybody avoided, hastening by without looking that way. The popular report, therefore, may have been true. At any rate, it served the purpose, with a hundred similar ones, of bending down the public mind under the weight of fear. The object of the Government was gained. All the ties of connexion, all the channels of communication, by means of which a spirit of opposition might have been formed, were severed. The population of Paris was reduced to a collection of units, each occupied by the care of its own preservation, each avoiding every intercourse beyond what was strictly necessary for life. Friends ceased to see friends; relations became circumspect in their calls upon relations. I went to see M. ——, and was told by his wife that he was out of town. He came after me when I was half-way down stairs, and begged me not to call again. One person whispered to me that a gendarme, who lived close by, had been seen going out in the dress of a priest. Many women were said to be employed as spies. Not a day passed but some individual of ill-omened aspect made inquiries about one of one's porter. Everything that might compromise was speedily put out of sight. I had a complete collection of the works of Proudhon. Some

kind soul, I could never discover whom, though I might suspect, destroyed it: and this exaggerated fear went so far, that there was a general razzia in the house on all good books, pistols, and other explosive articles.

It would be too long, however, to enumerate all circumstances of this kind, illustrative of the miserable downheartedness to which Paris was reduced. Meanwhile the provinces had flown hastily, without any preparation or concert, to arms, and were being put down one by one, with circumstances of more or less barbarity. It was impossible to repeat the scene of the Boulevards everywhere, but it was necessary that terror should be general. According to the Government papers, some atrocities were committed in agricultural districts; and a M. Cauvain, writing in the "Constitutionnel," had the audacity to talk of children being thrown alive into furnaces! The favourite epithet which these hired libellers applied to the Republicans who rallied round the Constitution, was that of Cannibals. I believe some acts of barbarity were committed, though, of course, nothing to equal the scene on the Boulevards. Great effect was produced by the statement that the wife of the Prefect of the Nièvre had been violated in the public place of Clamecy; and the Government would not allow that unfortunate gentleman to publish the fact that he had never been married at

all. Not only so, but the odious invention was introduced into a huge calumny in oil, exhibited at the last exposition of paintings!

At length came out the famous proclamation, by which every person who was at that time, or ever had been, member of a secret society, was condemned to transportation beyond the seas! In this way at least two millions of persons were made liable to exile; and as there was to be no judgment, it was felt that the Government intended to reserve to itself the power of transporting whoever should be bold enough to offer any opposition. The terror that spread in the then condition of minds may easily be imagined; and no other explanation than this is required of the immense majority that voted "Yes" a few days afterwards, and that in the very provinces most menaced, on the spots where the Government papers laid the scene of a mythological Jacquerie, the people voted unanimously with open bulletins for the usurpation. Every one was afraid of being transported.

It is customary to praise Louis Napoleon for the admirable manner in which he carried out the plans which he had previously laid down. The fact is, that he proceeded in a totally different manner from what he had intended, and worked with different instruments upon different elements. He believed himself to be more popular in Paris than he really

was, but expected a more vigorous armed resistance. He anticipated that the majority of the country would vote against him, and therefore began by announcing the suppression of the ballot, and by ordering the people to come up and openly say "Yes" or "No" under the bayonets of his soldiers. When, however, he saw that it was possible to frighten the whole nation out of all ideas of honour and liberty, he determined to enjoy the pleasure of an apparently free election; and, during a whole fortnight, directed his efforts solely to deepen and strengthen the feeling of terror throughout the whole length of the land. I know that at the election there was much fraud and much violence. The voters were marshalled into columns by the priests and the mayors, and headed by a few of the most enthusiastic Bonapartists, who pinned their bulletins to their hats, and thus by example compelled the others to do likewise; for whoever hesitated was instantly assailed by the accusation of Socialism, and threatened with transportation. However, the great feature of the election of December the 20th, 1851, was, that men who had previously belonged to different parties; who had conspired with Barbés and Sobrier; who had shouted at the heels of Louis Blanc; who had adored Ledru Rollin; who had looked upon M. Baze as the incarnation of parliamentary integrity; who had talked

treason with M. Thiers; who regretted M. Guizot; who had worn medals of Henri Cinq; who had invariably—such was their power of appreciation—treated Louis Napoleon as a Cretin;—all went up together, abjuring their prejudices, their ideas, and their faith, under the influence of that degrading sentiment of Fear, and voted themselves a Master—gave themselves up absolutely, unconditionally, into the power of one man. This is a great lesson. It teaches us how little influential after all is civilisation upon mankind; how slight a hold have upon us the acquired ideas of honour, of justice, of liberty, of duty, of devotion, and everything that makes man respectable; how near a citizen, prepared to die for his country, is to the savage flying from his own shadow in a wood, or starting at the creaking of a bough moved by the wind!

I had intended—in what, perhaps, would have a somewhat pedantic adherence to my title—to give an outline of the events of French history since 1851, and an analysis of the proceedings of the Imperial Government. It is almost impossible, however, to obtain information concerning contemporary doings that will not instantly be disputed, perhaps disproved. Under the present circumstances of France, moreover, it would be idle to record more than impressions. From the commencement of the Dictatorship all criticism on public matters has been suppressed.

We are compelled to rely on official representations, necessarily not credible; or on rumours that find their way abroad by no one knows what channels, and cannot be implicitly depended on. Louis Napoleon pays the usual penalty of all who gag the press. The most frightful accusations are made against him and his supporters, and are believed, because no discussion is allowed. Even under the Republic, the Party of Order, as it called itself, had begun the war against the pen—a sure sign that it meditated tyranny. Under the Empire, a universal silence broods over the country, broken only by voices that call aloud and find belief nowhere. The distinguishing characteristic of French society at this moment is avidity for intelligence coupled with complete scepticism. They listen because they want some excitement, but give no heed to what they hear; and go from one to the other with vacant faces, still asking, "What news? what news?"

What can be new to them now? They have tried all forms of government, and found not one adapted to them. Too idle for liberty and too corrupt; with many fine qualities and finer aspirations; they are compelled to lie down awhile under a despotism which claims, though in every place and at every time it does not exercise the right, to interfere with their opinions and even with their pleasures; to prescribe what they shall think,

where they shall eat, at what age their daughters may dance; which levies taxes on them by means of an Assembly virtually nominated by itself; and which acknowledges no control, though control is, of course, exercised in an indirect manner by public opinion. The government of Napoleon III. may be called a tyranny tempered by wit. It can afford to commit any act of violence, but dare not be ridiculous. Truly the example of France is a great lesson; but instead of teaching what interested sophists would have us believe—that political rights should only be granted when it is impossible to refuse them—it teaches that we should make haste to accustom as many classes as possible to the exercise of liberty—and there can be no liberty for a man whose affairs are transacted as a privilege by others, since we cannot always depend for our salvation on the virtue of the Upper Ranks of Society.

THE END.

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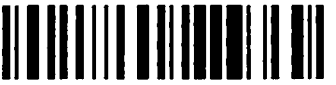
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